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# DOWNWARD PATHS

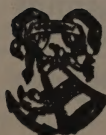




# DOWNWARD PATHS

AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES  
WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE  
MAKING OF THE PROSTITUTE

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
A. MAUDE ROYDEN



LONDON  
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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD BY A. MAUDE ROYDEN . . . .	vii.
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	I
II. BAD HOMES AND THE DESECRATION OF CHILDHOOD . . . . .	19
III. DELIBERATE CHOICE : THE PERILS OF ADO- LESCENCE, TEMPERAMENT, GAIN . . . .	32
IV. HOMELESSNESS . . . . .	72
V. SEDUCTION AND DESERTION . . . . .	83
VI. COMPULSION AND EXPLOITATION . . . .	100
VII. THE MARRIED AND THE WIDOWED . . . .	117
VIII. THE FEEBLE MINDED . . . . .	125
IX. PROSTITUTION AND THE LABOUR MARKET . .	139
AFTERWORD . . . . .	185
APPENDIX : TABULATED CASES . . . . .	189
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	197





## FOREWORD

THIS little book is published under a Trust, and the several writers who have contributed to produce it desire that their names should remain unknown. They are women who, realising that knowledge is the first need of the reformer, have sought at least to make a beginning, and to study the conditions of a great and terrible problem which society must ultimately attempt to solve. They have done so without deciding beforehand what they were going to find ; and this intellectual detachment constitutes the value of the book. For the question of moral reform—and especially of reform in matters of sex-relationship—has too often been approached in a very different spirit. It is one on which those who feel at all are apt to feel so strongly that the detachment of mind necessary to the true enquirer becomes impossible. They seek to prove a case rather than to acquire knowledge, and knowledge is sought only to support their proof. Consequently, when public opinion becomes ripe for some advance, however small, no body of reliable information exists, by which reform may be guided ; and the impulse is lost. The recent agitation in favour of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1912) was a case in point. Here, under a genuine impulse of humanity, created largely by the Woman's Movement with its growing sense of the solidarity and mutual responsibility of women, public opinion demanded

that " something should be done " to suppress the traffic in women and girls for the purposes of prostitution. But the good intentions of the man (and woman) in the street were equalled or even surpassed by his profound ignorance of the problem with which he proposed to deal. Incredible and even grotesque stories were told and believed on the slenderest authority, or on no authority at all. The only demand was that they should be sufficiently frightful. Newspapers and bookstalls were deluged with articles, pamphlets, and books narrating horrors and proposing remedies as preposterous—and sometimes as horrible—as the disease. The revival of the Contagious Diseases Acts was openly advocated by writers who were apparently ignorant that these Acts had proved a sanitary failure, and who were feverishly anxious to make some " practical " suggestion. This is not the spirit in which to approach a difficult and complicated problem, and in the course of time, many stories having been shown to be without foundation in fact, incredulity took the place of credulity, and public interest in an urgent problem which little had been done to solve, rapidly evaporated.

The Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases has, it is true, been at work in a more sober and scientific spirit, on another side of the same problem. Unfortunately, it generally happens that the public interest which demanded the appointment of a Commission easily believes that no more remains to be done, and when (generally after a long interval) the report appears, there is no more interest in the matter, and none of that insistent demand which alone can secure action. Foreseeing this danger, a Council for Combating Venereal Diseases has been formed to sustain and educate public interest in the questions under discussion, in the hope that when action again becomes possible, there will be

an enlightened body of opinion to guide and support it. The need for such education has been enormously increased by the War. All who have any knowledge at all of the history of venereal diseases know that the number of cases of illness takes a terrible leap upward after a war. Already people are growing uneasy, and as at the time of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, but now with greater urgency and show of reason, the demand is made for a revival of the Contagious Diseases Acts, or some such administrative measures as created the *police des mœurs* in France.\* To those who know how utterly useless these measures have already proved from a hygienic point of view, the need for more accurate information as to the causes of prostitution becomes visibly more urgent. They are aware how readily (and how fruitlessly) the average mind turns to the suppression of the result—venereal disease—and how ignorant most of us are about the cause—prostitution. The question then immediately arises—what is the cause of this cause? What makes women prostitute themselves? Why is a trade so dangerous to health, so unprotected by law or custom, so universally condemned by public opinion, always supplied? What are the motives which bring women into it? These are the questions to which we must turn our attention before we can hope to solve “the social problem.”

Panic legislation, such as is already being demanded, and may be demanded with much greater insistence later on, is no remedy. It is apt rather to increase than

\* Since the above was written, the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases has reported, and has, without a single dissident, condemned the system once set up in this country by the Contagious Diseases Acts. There are, however, only too many less enlightened people who still desire to see their re-enactment. The Report of the Royal Commission will be a powerful weapon indeed against such demands.

to lessen the evil. It is from enquiries like those made by the authors of *Downward Paths* that we may hope for light enough to proceed to wise reform.

The value of the studies collected here lies in the fact that, though they admittedly cover but a small part of the ground, and are too few in number for generalisation, they have at least been made by enquirers who had no case to prove, but sought solely for enlightenment. We have in this country nothing like the great body of evidence collected by the different Vice-Commissions in America, though a beginning in this direction is being made. This little book, small as it is, has its place in the independent investigation of facts which remains to be made on a much larger scale. Its authors have fixed their attention on causes rather than results.

One aspect of this problem is brought home to us with great urgency even by the comparatively small number of cases here studied and set down, and its gravity is accentuated by the wide professional experience of at least one of the authors as to the effect of social conditions on the mental and physical health of girls: the nature of our social responsibility for the outcast. The chapters on economic pressure and the effect of early influences are specially enlightening on this point. It is astonishing to find experts denying the element of economic pressure as a factor in the creation of the prostitute. It is an influence constantly present, and it is only when we interpret it to mean actual physical starvation, that we can say it is rarely the determining factor. "Economic pressure" does not begin with starvation: it ends there. There has gone before, the long strain of under-feeding and overwork, of the absence of interest, variety, and colour, and all that makes life worth living to a human being. Poverty often means isolation, and isolation the absence of all those ties which



keep us in our place in the social order, and make it worth while to preserve our self-respect. To be without these is to be constantly in danger, and it is economic pressure which has thrust many over the brink of the precipice, though few would say their fall was due to actual starvation.

Intimately connected with this aspect of the question is that of home and housing, especially of the child. The age at which children are first corrupted is almost incredibly early until we consider the nature of the surroundings in which they grow up. Insufficient space, overcrowding, the herding together of all ages and both sexes ; these things break down the barriers of a natural modesty and reserve. Where decency is practically impossible, unchastity will follow, and follow almost as a matter of course. There are certain natural defences in the right instincts of young people brought up in the right kind of home, which we look for in vain among those who have never had space enough for growth or privacy enough for refinement.

In such sordid circumstances, adolescence comes to thousands of girls and boys. At the critical age of physical and mental development, when all our care is needed, and both discipline and sympathetic insight are most imperative, they are turned out into the world to fight for themselves. Education, which has rather stimulated than repressed the natural curiosity and adventurous spirit of youth, ends for many just when it is needed most. The boy or girl of thirteen or fourteen—just entering on the heritage of maturity—is given instead a life of dull and sordid toil, without interest, without variety, without scope. Is it surprising that, out of sheer craving for interest and change, many girls “go wrong”? Life has given them so little, and they wanted so much.

It must never be forgotten that the coming of adolescence brings mental and spiritual as well as physical change. It has been noted again and again that this is the age at which "conversions" take place most commonly, at which the religious instinct awakes, and young people are peculiarly susceptible to influence. It is true of good influences; for the same reasons it is also true of bad. The mind is reaching out to new things, the temperament often changes, the desire for adventure is increased. Is it altogether the fault of the child if the world offers it so little that develops the higher susceptibility and so much that appeals to the lower? It is all awake—to good and evil—but we have not seized the hour of opportunity, and the young adolescent looks for interest and excitement elsewhere.

To girls, the temptations of curiosity and of the awakening sex-instinct go often hand in hand with the possibility of gain; and money means so much to those who want variety, colour, life. It is with this aspect of the problem—with the degradation of sex-relations to an economic bargain that this book is concerned. Its enquiry is into the causes which induce women to consent to this ugly and sordid exchange. The trade relation—bald, ugly, unadorned—is studied here in its most brutal form, that which is commonly called "prostitution." But it is worth remembering that the enquiry is one which will carry us very far before it is finished. Few will question the decision that "sex is not to be the subject of economic bargain," when it is stated in simple terms like these and with reference to the traffic of the street. But if it is accepted in all its implications, we are ultimately faced with a re-consideration of the whole economic position of women, and much that we have accepted as part of the very fabric of society

must now be challenged. "An economic bargain for sex-companionship," says one of the writers of this book, "has a sordid element which makes it inherently liable to degenerate into prostitution." Is this true? Can it be doubted? And, if not, shall we not be compelled to carry our enquiry into the nature and the causes of prostitution much further than we at first believed? Has not the status of women in marriage also to be re-considered?

To those who admit the truth at least of the proposition thus baldly stated—that "sex is not to be the subject of economic bargain"—this book is commended. It is a small contribution to one part only of a vast and complicated problem: but it is made without prejudice. It is an enquiry only, but an enquiry actuated solely by a desire to discover the facts, and therefore it is made on the right lines, and has a permanent value. That value is enormously increased by the intensity of human feeling with which the desires, the difficulties, and the dangers of the woman who sells herself are realised, and the passion of sympathy which seeks to identify itself with her outlook and her experience. The women who write are not Pharisees writing about Publicans, but human beings seeking to understand and enter into fellowship with the outcasts of their sex, on the basis of a common womanhood—a common humanity. Observations thus made may well serve as a starting-point for other and wider investigations which shall give us at last the material for enlightened, sane, and scientific reforms.

A. MAUDE ROYDEN.



# DOWNWARD PATHS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

DURING the past century the institution of prostitution has rapidly fallen out of social favour. Our age has been an age of sexual idealism, and both men and women feel with increasing intensity that the barter of sex is an offence against Nature, and that it is likely to leave a lasting stain on him who buys as well as on her who sells. Our social and economic conscience prevents us regarding with equanimity the existence within the State of a huge outcast and partly outlawed class such as prostitution has always made of its servants, and is horrified at the vast sum of money spent in diverting this class from productive labour and maintaining it in parasitic idleness. The advance of medical knowledge and the breakdown of secrecy on the subject has informed us that the prostitute, as well as being heavily stricken herself, spreads about the world a poison which does not discriminate between the guilty and the innocent. And more and more do women feel it as an affront to their pride that large numbers of their sex should live in degraded conditions and be exposed to universal contempt for the convenience of men.

The emancipation of women has indeed contributed to this change of opinion in more than one way. For



prostitution is in many matters an active nuisance to the working woman : she will even find that the municipality will refuse to supply her with the decent housing it supplies to the working man, for fear she may be a prostitute, and if she be in a disadvantageous economic position employers may offer her wages calculated on the supposition that being a woman she is inherently ready and willing to supplement them by prostitution. Now that these practical objections to prostitution have been grasped it is not surprising that a great many people are no longer to be overawed by the statement that it is, if not " the oldest profession " in the world, at least one of the oldest urban problems, and are prepared to revolt against it.

But the most wonderful element in this revolt has been the awakening of the sense of social responsibility among women. Hitherto " respectable " women have regarded the prostitute as a plague to be avoided, or at least as a lost soul to be saved. Now they are beginning to realise that she is a disaster to be prevented, and furthermore a disaster for which they have a personal responsibility. The full significance of the cynical doctrine that the existence of a prostitute class is an enormous protection to the sheltered women of the home, diverting from them the force of men's vagrant passions, is striking into the consciousness of the modern educated woman with overwhelming force. She realises at last that her own immunity from temptation is bought at the price of increased danger for some of the most helpless, wretched and ignorant girls in the community, who are infinitely less well equipped for self-protection than she or her daughters. And now on all sides women are repudiating this bargain, and are even facing deliberately the drastic re-arrangement of cherished social institutions in order to secure the abolition of the prostitute class.

This spirit of revolt expresses itself in ways that range from the devices of narrow sectarianism to those of the broadest humanitarianism. But very rarely does it take the form of dispassionate research into the actual facts of the matter. The strong passions which inspire this revolt—religion, sexual idealism, the desire for social health and well-being, the irritation of those who feel their pride and independence continually threatened—are not favourable to the cultivation of scientific detachment and the patient handling of facts. If a person is so moved by the superficial horrors of prostitution that he is prepared to take action in this painful matter, it is probable this very sensitiveness will make it impossible for him to look on the worse horrors which lie beneath the surface. For the prostitute's story commonly begins with the ruin of childhood, the brutal shattering of illusions natural to the young, the reckless despair of the unlucky, or the callousness due to a poverty so urgent that no ideal emotions can develop : and, as we shall see in the course of the following enquiry, its endings are very often in disease and the darkest misery. So the majority of the foes of prostitution cannot bear to spend their time in these repulsively sordid or intolerably sad investigations, and hastily apply to the disease whatever seems to their several temperaments the soundest remedy. Some of them join the devoted army of rescue-workers. Others work on various bodies formed to clear the streets and music-halls of the traffic. Others try to settle the question by repressive legislation aimed at the more rigorous punishment of procurers and "bullies" and brothel-keepers. And the vaster body of public opinion which takes no part in building though it wishes the builders well, believes vaguely in being "kind" to the prostitute, whom it imagines as a picturesque and incredibly wronged Marguerite Gautier : or it thinks that the problem will

presently be solved by a campaign for purity among men and a recognition of the equality of women : or it persecutes the prostitute whenever it gets hold of her with severities such as the refusal of certain institutions to treat unmarried women suffering from venereal disease.

Some of the work done in these ways is very splendid : in many cases it could not be better. And yet every one of these remedies is open to objection. It is not that we wish to support the easy accusation that they are futile because they deal with the symptoms and results of prostitution and not with its causes. For, as we shall see in the course of the following enquiry, prostitution is not so much an institution in itself as the rubbish-heap necessitated by the way in which other much respected institutions are built : to deal with it means the rejection and adaptation of much that seems sacred to the ordinary eye. So many years must pass before we have educated ourselves to see and act ruthlessly in social reconstruction that we dare not discourage those who repair the evil wrought by prostitution. But experience has warned us over and over again that uninformed benevolence may accidentally achieve malignant ends. The labouring classes were cheated out of fair wages by benevolent mishandling of the Poor Law : the little children were driven into the factories by a benevolent plan to relieve unemployment. If we say "Prostitution is a bad thing : let us suppress it by such and such a law" we may be saying something as disastrous as "Poverty is a bad thing : let us help the poor out of the rates," or "Unemployment is a bad thing : let us employ everyone, even the children." It is not only that we may waste our time in attacking evils that do not exist and in rescuing by religious teaching and rigid seclusion people who have always disliked prostitution as much as

we do ourselves, we may inflict actual damage on the State by making laws that attack the liberty of the subject or reintroducing barbarous punishments into the penal code. And, as is very likely, we may find ourselves treating the prostitute as an outlaw. Nothing now on the statute-book makes her so, and it would be unjustifiable if it did, since we do not and cannot outlaw the men who maintain her as a prostitute. It is our duty to ascertain the rights and necessities of every woman and respect these in our legislation.

It is plain that those who intervene in the matter of prostitution must submit to the same obligation of knowledge which is imposed on those who intervene in industrial affairs. We must disregard the repulsiveness of the subject and ask such questions as we would ask in the investigation of any other offensive and dangerous trade. How many workers does prostitution employ? Under what conditions do they work? What remuneration do they receive? Why do they take up this work?

The first question is unanswerable. There is no way of computing the number of prostitutes in London or any other city in Great Britain. No local survey of prostitution such as that published by the Chicago Vice Commission has been attempted in this country, and if it were, our local conditions probably prevent the collection of any reliable figures. We have no "Red Light" districts as in America. We have no State Regulation of Vice as on the Continent, though, since no regulated city succeeds in registering more than a proportion of the regular prostitutes and hardly ever registers a clandestine prostitute, this is no great loss.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most complete information is in the hands

<sup>1</sup> For Paris, estimates made by prominent police officials vary from 80,000 to 14,000! See Flexner, "Prostitution in Europe," p. 25.

of the police : without doubt much is known statistically at Scotland Yard and still more could be collected by officially recognised investigators from local police stations and individual officers. But it is not the policy of the authorities to publish anything but the bare figures of the convictions for solicitation and brothel-keeping. And since prostitution *per se* is not an offence against English law and the prostitute is not convicted unless she has infringed certain rules of decorum, (except in certain towns which are governed by special Acts), we can no more estimate the total number of prostitutes from these figures than we could estimate the total number of motorists in England from the convictions for furious driving. The figures supplied by rescue homes are as fractional : they merely record that such and such a number of women have left the streets because of failure or disgust. And when the investigator turns from these sources and tries to count with his own eyes he sees that his task is practically impossible. It might have been easier when the majority of prostitutes were collected in brothels, but that day is over and such brothels as still carry on business in the West End under the guise of manicure or massage establishments, scent shops, or schools of languages or elocution, spring up and pass away with fungoid rapidity. It will readily be understood that in countries where State regulation is in force, or where the administration of the law is corrupt to the core, as in America, proprietors of disorderly houses will have much greater security of tenure than in England and prostitution becomes an important field for the investment of capital. This fundamental difference between prostitution as carried on in England and America and Continental countries, is strikingly apparent in certain valuable studies recently published.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Rockefeller Bureau of Social Hygiene. "Prostitution



Here the army of prostitutes consists of shadowy figures who straggle through a hundred streets all over London or lurk in flats and houses in every quarter : ] who are often not even recognisably prostitutes, because they are also shop-assistants and waitresses and milliners and dress-makers, and have to keep up the respectable appearance which Society expects from these wage-earners. Such an unboundaried and unmarked class cannot be numbered by any census.

The impossibility of answering the first question prepares us for the difficulty of the other three. If the study of prostitution is begun in a great city, such as London, the observer will notice that not only is there at every corner some manifestation of this wide ministry to civilized man's diversity of requirement from female society, but that it appears in forms so various and contrasted that often one hesitates to identify it. One may see half a dozen wholly dissimilar women in succession going about their similar business. This thin and insignificant girl, quietly dressed, and no longer young, who looks like a teacher on her way home from school until she arouses one's suspicion by hailing a taxi and waiting till a man furtively gets in beside her, seems to have nothing in common with those two pretty girls in evening dress and fantastic hats, who sit together in a restaurant frequented by the *demi-monde*, beating the table with their fists and singing or shouting their loudest when any man approaches their corner, until a final burst of triumph announces the victorious capture of two young men. There seems no link between them and that poor old woman of sixty, stout and motherly and half-drunk, who comes into the women's common lodging-house in a

in Europe," by Abraham Flexner. "Commercialised Prostitution in New York," by George Kreeland. "A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil," by Miss Jane Addams.

slum quarter at eleven o'clock, with her felt slippers sodden and her skirt bedraggled with the mud of a wet night in January, and, assuming that all present follow the same occupation as herself, confides to each in turn that she has got to go out again as she hasn't got anyone yet, and her poor feet do ache so. She seems to have no relationship to the beautiful young woman wrapped in a rich evening cloak who walks from the underground station in a quiet West End quarter to her flat in a neighbouring square with a step which seems strangely slow for one in the full vigour of womanhood until one sees that it is regulated to suit the decrepitude of the elderly man who is following her at a distance of ten paces. And the brazen and unkempt child of thirteen who importunes passers-by in a slum of ill-repute when no policeman is in sight, is surely unconnected with the apathetic young woman of sixteen, curiously well-dressed for a working-class girl, whose hard-mouthed mother brings her from a tenement in Central London to Tottenham Court Road by motor bus, takes her up a side street, and presently returns alone.

The diversity of these six types which we have picked at random indicates the difficulties of our task. The Underworld of a great city has as many ranks and classes as society in general. To take one class of prostitute, as for example the inhabitants of one block of flats, the clients of one dressmaker, the *habituées* of one restaurant, would teach us no more of the conditions of the whole body of prostitutes than a similar investigation of one residential street, the clients of one tailor, or the customers of one eating-house would teach us of the condition of the whole population. It is obvious that all these different types work under different conditions and for different rates of pay and have different antecedents. For any complete survey of prostitution one would have

to collect thousands of examples. If we have failed to collect these thousands, and have written chiefly of the unsuccessful prostitutes who are described to us by rescue workers, our excuse lies in the inaccessibility of the successful prostitute.

This inaccessibility is unfortunately most marked in the case of the most successful women. For, as they are presumably the most intelligent of their profession, it is possible that they might meet an impartial enquirer with ready information and help, and in themselves they would be useful as showing how the character is affected by prostitution when it is unaccompanied by the squalor and disorder which are the concomitants of the lower grades of the profession. But these higher ranks are hidden behind impenetrable walls. The woman with a flat and a regular clientèle makes her appointments by post or telephone, and does not cheapen herself by appearing on the streets or public places to seek custom. She cannot be observed as she goes about her shopping or amusements, for she is indistinguishable in appearance from the smarter actress and woman of society. She has her own social circle, into which a stranger cannot break uninvited any more than into the social circles of Queen's Gate. And if we rely for information on those who are friendly to her, we are likely to be confused by the fact that they have seen her bearing herself gaily and cheerfully as her professional honour demands, and concealing all her cares lest she should seem unattractive. It is possible that an enquirer with unlimited time and patience might get to know something of this class, and the useful collection of histories made by a corsetière who was patronised by a large number of these women suggests that there are sources which we have not tapped. But it would be too vast an undertaking for a broad enquiry such as this is intended to be, and

we have accepted such incidental views of the prosperous prostitute as we could obtain.

The lower grades of prostitutes are more accessible, but that is counterbalanced by their inability to tell their story. It is not only that, every man's hand being against them, they lie to cover up their tracks, but that they cannot know or tell the truth. The ordinary prostitute is an unromantic figure, moving through sordid surroundings on her sordid business, so pre-occupied with the exigencies of food and drink and shelter that she is unconscious of the tragedy of her situation. She is intellectually uninteresting, and talks dully and in tedious slang about little besides dress and her real or fictitious professional experiences. As she relates to one the limits of her beat, and in the same breath, feigning respectability, tells one that she goes to work with a mistress who gave her the new coat and skirt she is wearing, and that she got her black eye there too "against the door-key," adding inconsequently that she's all right, and "don't do no one any harm," one sees that even as a liar she is colourless and dispirited. She is as inarticulate a piece of waste as the slag-heap by the roadside. And the outward circumstances of her life give as little enlightenment as her own tongue. The sight of the bully who lurks for her at the corner of the next street may make one wonder whether she has a tragic history of abduction and ill-treatment: but in all likelihood they live together in a particularly tedious kind of domesticity, and the sense of companionship he gives her so far outweighs any fear he may inspire that if he is sent to gaol she will wait for him at the prison gates on the morning of his release. That indeed is the chief difficulty of finding out the truth about the prostitute. Definite catastrophes like abduction but rarely play a part in bringing her on to the streets and

keeping her there. Usually she is the victim of a combination of circumstances which close round her so slowly and wear away her sensibilities so surely that she cannot be expected to give a clear account of what has happened to her.

The rashness of the easy assumption that, because a prostitute cannot state her case, she has not got one, may be indicated by the history of a young general servant, A. H. When this girl was found in the maternity ward of a workhouse infirmary, she could give only a most confused and unsatisfactory account of her life. Yet when reference was made to the various persons, her employers and others, whom she mentioned in her narrative, she proved to have been a most unwilling victim of overwhelming misfortune. Her home was respectable but miserably poor, and she entered domestic service with the handicap of a bad digestion and a tendency to anæmia. All her past employers give her a thoroughly good character, but most of them also speak of her bad health, and she lost her places over and over again on this account. At last she became acutely ill, and, being homeless, took shelter at a Salvation Army Home. On convalescence she took another situation in London, but again felt ill and went to the workhouse infirmary. After this she took another situation, but had to leave on account of her bad health. She went into lodgings, but her money was soon exhausted, and she would almost have starved had not her landlady, though she could ill afford charity, let her stay on until the severity of her illness necessitated her removal to the workhouse infirmary. On coming out she found that the landlady had sold her box to pay the arrears of rent she owed. She then went to a common lodging-house, where she paid sixpence a night, and began to search for a situation. Her search was unsuccessful, for everyone



told her she looked too weak for work. At that pitch of desperation, when she was quite without strength to stand out against the way of life with which her associates in the workhouse infirmary and common lodging-house had familiarised her, she formed a connection with a soldier who gave her money from time to time. After three months he deserted her, and when she discovered that she was pregnant, she was unable to trace him. Then, finding it quite impossible to obtain work, she went out on the streets. The life she led there reduced her mind and body to such a state that by the time of her confinement she was too shattered to tell her story. That is an extreme case of the inarticulateness characteristic of the regular prostitute. It is only one degree less baffling than the denial of the clandestine prostitute that she is a prostitute. Her desire to retain the respect of the world forbids her to admit that she is anything but the shop-assistant or waitress that she is by day, so we know little about her. Yet here, as on the Continent, the major part of the traffic is carried on by clandestine prostitutes, and with them any attempt to deal with prostitution must first concern itself.

This inquiry was first begun as an investigation for social workers specially interested in discovering how far economic causes contributed to the making of prostitutes, and subsequently continued independently, kind permission having been given for the use of the material already obtained. Histories of women who had led a life of prostitution were sought wherever available, and forms asking for information about definite cases, and, wherever possible, about every consecutive case that came to the informant during some definite period, were sent to a number of the societies and individual workers of various religious denominations who undertake rescue work. In response over 1,200 histories

were received. Of these over 400 were rejected by a definition which limited the term "prostitute" to a woman who had relations with more than one man for gain, thus excluding the kept mistress and the woman who is promiscuous without being mercenary. In order that the information might not be limited to those who had failed in the profession and had been obliged to fall back on charity, another investigator (a man) was employed to visit the chief West End restaurants and music-halls, and by treating the women to drinks get them to tell their own stories. Twenty-one histories were collected in this way. Many other persons who were interested in the subject have sent one or more cases that have come under their personal notice. In addition a number of cases from the Report of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded (1908) were also used.

The investigators have interviewed many of the informants and have satisfied themselves with regard to the majority of histories that great care was taken to check the facts by reference to a woman's relatives, past employers and others. They also interviewed over a hundred other persons possessing information on the subject, some of them many times over. These include rescue and other social workers, matrons of rescue homes, secretaries to rescue societies, police-court missionaries, medical practitioners, nurses and matrons, clergy and missionaries, school-teachers, poor-law officials and relieving officers, poor-law guardians, persons employed in or connected with various professions and industries, for example, dressmakers, shop-assistants, actresses, typists, hotel servants, factory workers, and many others ; the subject was also discussed with some respectable working-class women, and certain well-known public men and women who have themselves studied the subject were asked to give their views. A

yet wider range of persons was approached by correspondence.

At a later stage investigators spent some time in watching prostitutes, either at their professional haunts or at common lodging-houses and other places where they talked among themselves when off duty. They also succeeded in making the acquaintance of a certain number of prostitutes, and the knowledge thus acquired threw much light on the histories provided by others.

The form with which the rescue societies were circularised proved to be not quite appropriate, so the whole of the material received was, after much tentative arrangement, retabulated under the following heads :—

Reference Number.

From (birthplace or home of the woman).

Home Conditions.

Mental Standard.

Personal Characteristics.

Employment.

Where lodging.

Age of first lapse.

Cause of first lapse.

Subsequent employment.

Age of becoming a prostitute.

History as a prostitute.

Conditions when last heard of.

Authority for the information.

The writers were confirmed in this final choice of classification by its similarity to the method adopted in the able tract on "Prostitution, its Cause and Cure," which has since been published by the Penal Reform League.

From the data thus collected we prepared our statistical tables. The different headings afforded material of varying value. Little light could be thrown on the

subject by the list of birthplaces, as the cases were drawn from a most scattered assortment of rescue institutions. The analysis of home conditions is very instructive. In 356 cases there is evidence enough for tabulation, and of these nearly 25 per cent. came from good homes : between 9 and 10 per cent. were educated in institutions such as workhouse schools, orphanages, and convents, and were for the most part subsequently sent out as general servants : more than 44 per cent. came from definitely bad homes, of which some detail is given in the analysis : and 21 per cent. were more or less homeless either in childhood or afterwards.

The information received under the " Mental Standard " heading is of no value as indicating the proportion of feeble-minded among prostitutes. Not only are rescue workers apt to apply the term loosely, but our statistics are overweighted by the number of cases taken from the Report of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded. The fact that the sources from which our histories are drawn are in some instances specialised institutions, which exclude feeble-minded girls altogether or accept no others, still further confuses our deductions. In all our tables the intelligent and the mentally deficient are separately analysed.

More reliable is the table of occupations, and the overwhelming preponderance of domestic servants is in agreement with all other statistics that we have seen. But the absence of certain occupations must not be taken as a guarantee of their superior moral tone : it may only mean that women in these occupations are less likely to fall back upon the rescue home when in difficulties than those in others.

The age of sixteen is that in which the greatest number of girls are said to make their first lapse from chastity. But more intimate conversation with prostitutes reveals

the fact that many took this step at an earlier age. Probably the age given refers to the first lapse which was detected or which led to pregnancy.

Seventeen is the age at which the greatest number became prostitutes.

There has been attempted an analysis of the causes leading to prostitution, which must necessarily be arbitrary as most cases come under several headings. In this table all cases where sexual inclinations are strong enough to cause a preference for such a life have been classified under this heading rather than any other : it will be seen that this proportion, taken at its maximum, is exceedingly small. And where other immediate causes have been traceable these have been taken in preference to home conditions, which have been analysed in a separate table. With these two simple rules our attempt at selection ends, and we have placed all other cases under the principal cause or, if there was none predominating, under one only of the various causes which appeared in the history.

It may be said that 830 cases are not a sufficient basis on which to build scientific generalisations, especially when the sources from which they have been gathered are not completely representative. We have endeavoured to meet this objection in the following pages by a careful consideration of how far the various facts unearthed by this enquiry may be assumed to be the exceptional accidents or the normal events of the life of prostitution. But even so the results of our labours are not anything like a complete survey of prostitution. The conditions under which the traffic is carried on vary with each woman, and each works under different conditions from season to season and from year to year : to enumerate them all would be an encyclopædic task. The prostitute is for the most part



an unbusinesslike person who rarely keeps accounts either on paper or in her head : so any estimates of her remuneration would be unreliable. Nor have we been able to follow the unhappy majority of these women as they sink in the social scale of the underworld or the happy few who rise out of it to commercial prosperity, or in rare instances, to the solid respectability of a good marriage. Doubtless the more intelligent, who are fortunate enough to withstand the degrading physical and moral influences of the life, eventually climb out of it : doubtless, on the other hand, the mortality among prostitutes is heavy, although we have found no evidence to support the common theory that a woman lives only five years after she goes on the streets<sup>1</sup>: doubtless large numbers pass through rescue homes and become general servants, often receiving little wages and less consideration on account of their loss of character : doubtless a great many marry men of all stations in life, though chiefly men of the working classes from which they themselves sprung. Of these vicissitudes little can be said in this book. What we have attempted is to solve the mystery of the making of the prostitute.

The life of the streets is full of hardship. To every prostitute the need for money is an insistent and gnawing anxiety. The drunken old woman of the slums must make her sixpence or go without her night's lodging : and if she does not earn a few extra coppers she cannot have her crust of bread and onion. The woman of the flat or smart restaurant must make her wages night by night or face the prospect of having to descend to a walk of the profession still more sordid and beset with physical dangers. There is no class from the highest to the lowest which is not harassed by this perpetual

<sup>1</sup> See Abraham Flexner, "Prostitution in Europe," pp. 21 and 22, for evidence on this point.

insecurity. And to make this precarious living the prostitute must be prepared to suffer indignity and bear much that, whatever be her nature, is in one way or another repulsive : she must face the danger, which is almost a certainty, of occasional rough usage : she must run the risk, which is great in inverse ratio to her intelligence, experience, and callousness, but which is never negligible, of disease : she must endure the knowledge that she has small chance of being able to carry on this life for any length of time without taking to drink, and that sooner or later she will probably have to submit to the disgrace and discomfort of prison life. All this is in her day's work.

It has been our endeavour to give some answer to the perplexing question : the life of prostitution being what it is, without esteem, precarious, full of hardship and disgust, why do women become prostitutes ?

## CHAPTER II

### BAD HOMES AND THE DESECRATION OF CHILDHOOD

HOME conditions, or the domestic environment during childhood, are probably the most powerful of all those influences which either predispose a young woman to accept a career of prostitution, or brace her to resist any impetus she may receive in such a direction.

The popular theory that those who rear children are largely responsible for how they turn out in after life, is fully justified by the facts revealed in the life histories of prostitutes. If we leave aside for a moment some 16 sets of parents who erred either in over-indulgence or over-severity, we find that in about 370 of our cases, where the information warrants conclusions, roughly one-half came from bad homes and nearly one-sixth were more or less homeless ; about one-twelfth had been educated in institutions of various descriptions, and only the remaining one-fourth came from good homes.

The vice that emanates from bad homes is the most repugnant of studies. We have no intention of entering into the squalid and monstrous details of the many sad cases in our collection. It is necessary, however, to form a definite mental picture of the exact nature of the influences described under this heading if we are to have any real understanding of the forces that go to make the prostitute.

Evil home influences of a positive nature, as dis-

tinguished from mere harshness, carelessness and neglect, may be summed up under the headings of premature acquaintance, from intimate observation and suggestion, with the sexual side of life, and premature sex experience of every kind. This includes the influence of prostitute mothers, drunken parents, and parents who drive their girls on to the streets, and it may imply every kind of outrage, from indecent handling to violation and incest. The very list is a horror, but those who in the interests of social regeneration are ready to face this problem, must dare to confront boldly the vileness from which its most tragic developments spring. More especially is it a duty to do so because once recognised, the most cruel and irreparable wrongs done to children, in this connection, prove to be largely preventable. Prevention, rather than rescue or punishment, is the watchword of the future in this as in other aspects of social suffering and degradation. But an evil must be faced and understood before prevention on a material scale is possible.

One or other of the above-named evil influences upon youthful life continually recurs in the cases we quote in later chapters of this book, but they cannot be dismissed with incidental and detached allusions under other headings. These vices and crimes of the home are closely interwoven one with another and must be regarded from a common standpoint. How far alcoholic intoxication is the cause of incest, we have no direct evidence, but the probable connection is obvious ; that the mother's prostitution is likely to make her a drunkard is an unquestionable fact, and again instances abound where the craving for drink is the motive which actuates parents in selling the bodies of their daughters.

But these drunken parents, fathers who violate their youthful daughters, elders who so callously exploit their

own flesh and blood, cannot be regarded simply as monstrosities, born with instincts different to those of other human beings. Their vices are at least in some degree and in some cases the products of environment; in many a case the parents' chance in life has been perhaps no better than that of the wretched daughter whose fate they now control. We must look behind the personal acts of the parents before fixing the responsibility.

Leaving the problem of heredity and mental deficiency to a later chapter, and here restricting ourselves to the influences of environment, we must allot to *bad housing and over-crowding* a foremost place, not only as undermining the physical health which conduces to normal sexual relationship, but also as a danger to the wholesome innocence of youth.

In speaking of wholesome innocence, it is by no means intended to hold a brief for ignorance, as against the social reformer who would insist on answering truthfully childish questions on sex. Those who demand systematic sex education for the child and even consider that children should be brought up accustomed to the sight of the nude human figure, will be the first to condemn the indecencies, squalor and physical dangers which the enforced intimacies of overcrowding imply.

That the loss of modesty due to overcrowding is a primary cause of subsequent prostitution is the opinion of most people who have studied the subject, though, as Mr. J. R. Macdonald<sup>1</sup> points out, it is still more potent as a cause of illegitimate births. In reference to Workhouse Maternity Wards, the investigators for the Poor Law Commission of 1908 report: "We believe that housing conditions must bear a large share of the blame

<sup>1</sup> The Nation's Morals, Proceedings of the Public Morals Conference, 1910.



for the fall of the women and girls who are thus made paupers."

One may also quote Mr. Coote, of the Vigilance Association, Lady Aberconway, and Mr. Holmes, of the Howard Association, formerly a Police Court Missionary, as having, with numberless others, expressed the opinion that precocious knowledge leads to prostitution.

"I will say with great emphasis," said Mr. Holmes in an interview, "that the housing and sleeping and feeding, and the loss of parental control due to the housing conditions, has led very largely to prostitution. From among that class (the overcrowded) the girls slide into it, so to speak, on account of their environment. When you know how many of the people of London live, and the children are born, and the mother dies in the same room and little children know all the mysteries of life and death, and boys and girls sleep together like little animals, you understand that squeamishness goes."

Indeed so well recognised is the connection that a rescue worker in South-east London <sup>1</sup> takes it for granted in saying of certain dingy and squalid tenements that "they are such dreadful places that the women living in them take to prostitution."

A medical woman <sup>2</sup> who has held a public position in Glasgow, writes of that city: "We suffer much from overcrowding, and I feel much of the immorality is due to want of common decency in the homes of the people."

In such homes, the loss of modesty is not the only moral evil that results. It cannot be too strongly impressed on persons interested in the housing problem that overcrowding means the violation of childhood in every degree, from the indecencies of mere childish horse-play, to complete debauchery.

There is no legal definition of the term "overcrowding,"

<sup>1</sup> Miss Billingham.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. McIlroy.

but it is generally accepted that 2 persons per room is the limit which hygiene and decency can permit. Above that figure, even the modest allowance of cubic air space (300, 400 cu. ft. per head) demanded by most bye-laws, can rarely be obtained. As in most tenements of several rooms one of the apartments is generally used exclusively as a kitchen or parlour, the nocturnal overcrowding is much greater than the average of 2 per room would indicate at first sight.

<sup>1</sup> Of the total population of England and Wales, 9.1% live over 2 in a room. Out of this 9.1%, .8% of the whole population live more than 3 per room, and .7% live 4 or more per room. London and other great cities are the most serious offenders, but the following table indicates that conditions are highly unsatisfactory in certain rural, and particularly in mining, districts.

Northumberland ...	28.7%	more than 2 persons per room.
Durham ... ..	28.5%	„ „ „ „ „ „
Denbigh ... ..	10.4%	„ „ „ „ „ „
West Riding of York- shire ... ..	10.3%	„ „ „ „ „ „

For the first time the Census returns of 1911 give a separate analysis of children under 10 in certain great towns, as shown overleaf.

Thus in these 8 cities alone 427,481 children are growing up, exposed to all the contamination of body and mind that overcrowding implies.

It is well known that housing conditions in Scotland are worse even than those in England and Wales. The revelations of the Scottish Land Inquiry Committee are nevertheless disquieting in the extreme. Their Report issued in 1914 states: "As many as 47.6% of the population of the burghs with more than 2,000 inhabitants are living more than 2 in a room: 22.7% more

<sup>1</sup> Census of 1911, Vol. 8.

## PERCENTAGES OF OVERCROWDED FAMILIES

(FAMILIES LIVING MORE THAN TWO PERSONS IN ONE ROOM)

TOWN.		Percent- age of Fami- lies over- crowded.	Percent- age of Popu- lation over- crowded.	Percentage of overcrowded Children under 10.		Total number of Children under 10 overcrowded.
				Per total Popu- lation.	Per Child Popu- lation.	
London	... ..	11.9	17.7	6.8	32.8	209,802
Newcastle	... ..	22.2	31.6	11.2	48.2	28,581
West Ham	... ..	9.4	15.2	5.9	24.3	17,462
Liverpool	... ..	6.9	10.1	4.0	16.4	27,872
Leeds	... ..	6.3	11.2	3.9	20.0	17,664
Birmingham	... ..	5.6	11.0	3.7	16.7	19,146
Manchester	... ..	4.0	7.2	2.7	12.4	18,196
Bradford	... ..	5.3	9.3	3.1	18.6	8,758

than 3 in a room ; 8.6% more than 4 in a room. Of the total number of houses in the same burghs 56.8% are of 1 or 2 rooms and 14.4% of 1 room. In the same burghs 52.9% of the total population are living in houses of 1 or 2 rooms and the percentage living in 1 roomed houses is 9.7% "

There is still a very prevalent idea that a child below puberty is a sexless being. We know now that this is a complete delusion, and that the sexual characteristics it is to display in later life exist in a nascent form from the earliest age. The herding together of even tiny children without close supervision means almost inevitably that their innocent animal instincts lead them into indecent play and undesirable habits. Sleeping together in the same bed, especially in dirty and verminous surroundings which produce irritation and restlessness, necessarily gives the maximum of temptation and opportunity, and the loneliness of country lanes and commons and contaminating influences in playgrounds may also lead to evil practices.

If continued unchecked, either by detection and punishment, or preferably by the introduction of wholesome moral influences, actual intercourse will sooner or later take place. The prevalence of this is much greater than persons not intimately acquainted with the life of the very poorest would imagine. It is naturally excessively difficult of detection, much more so than assault by adults, as physical injury or pregnancy are not likely to result. The evidence we have been able to collect is mainly indirect, and the result of the personal opinion of witnesses based on long experience, rather than of statistics.

Two ladies associated with two different penitentiaries, one for intelligent, the other for weak-minded girls, have testified independently that they believe a large proportion of the girls who drift into these institutions have had relations with boys, or been wronged by adults, while children. These facts seldom come out at first, and it is remarkable how very reluctant even the most hardened women appear to own to childish experiences. But in High Church establishments, girls of indifferent education are apt to ask assistance in the writing out of the confession which some of them desire to make, if they become devotionally religious, and so a sister may come to know a good deal of the past history of the girls even on points where no enquiry has been made.

Judge Lindsey, the well-known Judge of the Juvenile Court of Denver, says that nine-tenths of the girls who "go wrong," whether or not they sink in the world, do so owing to the inattention of their parents, and that in the case of most prostitutes the mischief is really done before the age of 12, "every wayward girl I have ever talked to has assured me of this truth."

While general promiscuity often occurs, it is the

opinion of Rescue Workers that brothers are most frequently the partners, and instances which it is not necessary to quote show that girls are sometimes the seducers.

A medical woman, employed in school inspection in the provinces, gives us strong testimony on the point. "Nothing surprised me more," she said, "than the frequency with which mothers confide to me their suspicions that their little ones have been tampered with." In nearly every case there seems to have been good grounds for the belief. I am sure far more of this goes on in town and country slums than one suspects. We have had strong corroborative evidence from many other medical women and nurses.

The Rev. T. G. Cree, of the Church Penitentiary Association,<sup>1</sup> asserts and gives instances to prove that children who have been tampered with are sources of widespread contamination, initiating their playmates, and thus spreading the moral and physical evil effects of criminal and indecent assault far beyond themselves, and introducing them into even carefully guarded homes. "The London County Council," he says, "has to its honour recognised this fact, and has entered into an agreement with the Church Penitentiary Association to receive children who have been criminally assaulted, or whose intimate knowledge of evil makes them dangerous companions for other children, into its special homes for such cases."

All this mass of evidence explains why punitive laws, however sharply administered, have only a limited power to stop the violation of children. The perpetrator is not always a monster, fit for imprisonment or flogging, but is often nearly as ignorant and childish, and as much a victim of his circumstances as the wretched little object

<sup>1</sup> "The Need for Rescue Work among Children."



of his crime. Even where he is an adult, it will be readily understood that a man who has made free with his own little sisters and playmates from childhood, has not much comprehension of the ordinary respectable person's respect for the "sanctity of childhood."

Turning to the question of "assaults" by adults, Mr. Robert Parr, Director of the N.S.P.C.C., said that, speaking with a full sense of responsibility, it might be stated that though more cases of assault and corruption of children were reported than formerly, there were really fewer offences than in former years.<sup>1</sup>

Be that as it may, the following figures relating to cases dealt with in the past five years by this Society alone are a sufficiently grave indictment of the existing state of things :—

Year.	Criminal Assault.	Indecent Assault.	Immoral Surroundings.	Total
1909-10 ... ..	186	233	452	871
1910-11 ... ..	187	198	416	801
1911-12 ... ..	161	229	417	807
1912-13 ... ..	163	194	485	842
1913-14 ... ..	187	259	519	965

It must be again emphasised that in the nature of things only a small proportion of such cases come to the knowledge of any Society or public authority.

Mrs. Bramwell Booth, in the same Report, says: "I wish to record my solemn conviction that the extent of this evil, the assault and corruption of girls who are young children, is infinitely greater than is at present realised. On one occasion I made a careful enquiry into the antecedents of prostitutes and was astonished to find in what a large proportion of cases their ruin had taken place in youth, often when quite young, and in many cases within the shelter of their own homes."

<sup>1</sup> National Union of Women Workers, Report of Conference of Rescue Workers held in Lincoln in 1910, p. 6.

What proportion of the total number of assaults are incestuous, or even to what extent incest now exists, is impossible to be ascertained. In homes where bad overcrowding is the rule, where the adults have themselves been corrupted in childhood, and where there is no strongly restraining, religious influence, incest is still probably much more common than is popularly supposed. Drink and the death of the mother seem to be the two conditions which make for most danger to the girls. Several rescue workers and philanthropic workers who know the life of the slums well, have assured us that not infrequently when the mother dies, the eldest girl "takes her place" in a much too comprehensive sense of the term. "Incest seems to be quite common within the boundaries of certain submerged classes, and almost unknown outside those limits," was the opinion of a social worker of long and varied experience. Among our own life histories we find the stories of six intelligent girls who after violation by their own fathers, took to prostitution at an early age.

After debiting bad housing and overcrowding with the greater part of this evil, there are other factors that must in fairness be mentioned. The personal equation must not be forgotten. Overcrowding, of course, intensifies temptation and multiplies opportunity, but there would appear to be an innate tendency in the individuals to succumb. We have the opinion of a doctor who has had considerable experience in examining persons guilty of these offences, that they frequently exhibit other mental abnormalities. A Church of England matron, who deals with girls who have been subjected to abnormal experiences, states that victims of incestuous assaults are "most difficult to deal with." They reveal a morbid emotion, are very susceptible

to religious influences, and are apt to develop signs of sexual perversion. Her account of her charges certainly suggests the probability of hereditary mental weakness.

A serious danger to childhood is the presence of men in the community who either congenitally or through developmental or senile perversion feel an abnormal sexual attraction towards young children. It is gradually coming to be recognised that these cases are often curable by skilled psychical or surgical treatment, and that for the incurable ones permanent detention in an asylum and not intermittent detention in prison is the appropriate fate. The conditions of prison life are more likely to intensify than to cure the morbid symptoms of the offender and leave him more unfit than ever to exercise self-restraint.

It appears that there is no definite provision in law to restrain men convicted of such offences from returning to homes where young children are growing up. The children may be removed under the Children's Act, no doubt usually are, but there is no guarantee that effective steps will be taken in every case.

Another disquieting aspect of this subject is the astonishing laxity in the administration of the law, revealed by a study of newspaper reports of trials for these offences. Scandalously light sentences, sometimes only a few weeks or months, are inflicted for serious assaults, and acquittal is secured with surprising ease. It is not our desire to press for harsh punishment for this or any other crime. But it is necessary to point out that the contrast between the attitude of the law and its administration to offences against property and to offences against children, is a symptom of a thoroughly unwholesome state of public feeling.

Another cause of assault is the terrible and ancient superstition that committing rape upon a virgin is a

cure for venereal disease, the disease being passed from the sufferer to the child. We have no direct evidence as to the extent to which this idea survives to-day, but we have good reason to believe that it is prevalent in rural districts of England and on the Continent and in America. The number of children who appear at Hospital suffering from syphilis and gonorrhœa due to sexual contact is not inconsiderable, and in many cases this is known to have been acquired from older men. In one case in our list a little girl was infected by her uncle at the age of seven.

The links in the chain that connect premature sexual experience of all kinds with prostitution are many and strong. Most obvious is the breakdown of the habit of cleanly self-respect of body and mind, which forms so strong a barrier against vicious habits and promiscuity in the decently nurtured man and woman. Quite as serious is the habit of submission to the physical demands of the opposite sex which evolves from upbringing in these squalid homes. It is borne out again and again by our life histories, that mere animal toleration, coupled with financial helplessness, and the entire absence from her surroundings of older persons whom she can trust or respect, is as dangerous to a woman as definite desires.

The effect of premature experience on the sexual instinct itself is more difficult to estimate. Does it produce an abnormal stimulation, which leads a woman to seek satisfaction for her needs in promiscuity, and thus carries her on to take advantage of man's paying capacity? Or does it produce a sort of anæsthesia, a blunting of normal sensations which makes sexual relations a matter of callous indifference? The medical evidence on this point is very scanty, but the researches of those who have investigated this subject (e.g. Prof.

Freud and his school) tend to show that premature experiences, especially if of violent nature, produce perversions and disturbances of the sexual feelings, which form the basis of many neuroses in adults.

It is, however, a fact of common experience amply borne out by this enquiry, that early familiarity with sexual matters makes even normal impulses infinitely harder to control. The normal girl, brought up in a wholesome atmosphere, feels and manifests innumerable impulses that are really of sexual origin, but is commonly without definite and conscious desire for sex relationships. The "restlessness" of the adolescent can be sublimated into aesthetic and intellectual interests and diverted away from sexual channels, if the upbringing has been normal. The unfortunate victims of the conditions we have described are articulate in their demands. They emerge from childhood in too many cases endowed with an appetite which tempts them into dangers, and deprived already of those precious safeguards for the young of both sexes, modesty, virginity, and a sense of self-respect.



## CHAPTER III

### DELIBERATE CHOICE : THE PERILS OF ADOLESCENCE, TEMPERAMENT, GAIN

MANY of the cases that come before us are described as having taken to a life of prostitution of their own deliberate choice. We have analysed 669 cases on p. 194. If we take from this analysis those where the adoption of the career is attributed to vanity, love of pleasure, an adventurous spirit, bad companions, a wilful and uncontrollable nature, laziness, love of sweets and the obligation to pay bridge debts, we get 23.7 per cent. of the whole. Adding to these all cases where the sexual inclinations are known to have been strongly developed, whatever other causes may have led the girl into this career, we bring the total up to 38.5 per cent. A further 1.2 per cent. chose the life deliberately with a view to the profits, and we thus arrive at a total of 40 per cent. who owe their position to their own tastes and temperaments.

This percentage is large enough to make it worth while investigating under what conditions such tastes arise and whether such temperaments are innate or the results of unfavourable environment or abnormal physiological conditions. It is the superficial view that women who are led to the streets by such frivolous and material considerations must be predestined and irreclaimable prostitutes. But there is an indefinite

proportion who although led into danger by their love of pleasure did not suspect the real character of their friends or the real meaning of prostitution. And the judgment of moralists may be further tempered by the fact that here we are dealing for the most part not with women, but with little girls. More than half of these girls were under eighteen years of age at the time of their first lapse from chastity, and the age of sixteen was by far the most dangerous.

Furthermore it must be borne in mind that these girls have been brought up in an almost complete ignorance of the nature and functions of their own bodies. It may seem absurd to urge ignorance of natural facts as an excuse when dealing with the products of congested towns and villages, but it is common experience that profound ignorance often co-exists with hardened depravity. An unwholesome upbringing usually acts in another unfortunate way by producing a curious prudery and false modesty, which makes such girls very inaccessible to attempts at instruction in hygiene, physiology, etc. Certainly the conventional adult policy of leaving the child to pick up its knowledge of sex and reproduction from casual and usually tainted sources, is responsible for many of the difficulties experienced in discussing adolescence and sex with young persons who might be averted from a vicious life by enlightenment and suggestion.

#### ADOLESCENCE AND ROMANCE

“ It is the appeal of civilisation, though not of what is best and finest in civilisation, which more than any other motive calls women to the career of a prostitute. . . . There cannot be the slightest doubt that it is this motive—the effort to supplement the imperfect opportunities for self-development offered by our restrained,

mechanical, and laborious civilisation—which plays one of the chief parts in inducing women to adopt, temporarily or permanently, a prostitute's life.”<sup>1</sup>

“ There is, however, another argument in support of prostitution which scarcely receives the emphasis it deserves. I refer to its influence in adding an element, in some form or another necessary, of gaiety and variety to the ordered complexity of modern life, a relief from the monotony of its mechanical routine, a distraction from its dull and respectable monotony. This is distinct from the more specific function of prostitution as an outlet for superfluous sexual energy, and may even affect those who have little or no commerce with prostitutes.”<sup>2</sup>

“ This civilisation factor of prostitution, the influence of luxury and excitement and refinement in attracting the girl of the people, as the flame attracts the moth, is indicated by the fact that it is the country dwellers who chiefly succumb to the fascination. The girls whose adolescent explosive and orgiastic impulses, sometimes increased by a slight congenital lack of nervous balance, have been latent in the dull monotony of country life and heightened by the spectacle of luxury acting on the unrelieved drudgery of town life, find at last their complete gratification in the career of a prostitute.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus does Mr. Havelock Ellis explain the great and justifiable human hunger that lies behind the perplexing appetites which appear near the head of most statistical tables of the causes of prostitution in terms such as “ love of pleasure,” “ vanity and laziness,” “ greed for sweets,” “ love of company,” and so forth. We suggest that it is chiefly at certain ages and in certain circumstances that this hunger takes these dangerous forms.

<sup>1</sup> “ The Psychology of Sex, VI.,” p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 293–4.

If we turn to 150 histories of prostitutes in which ages are given, and the information is detailed, we find that the motives that led them when young girls to wilful acts of unchastity, followed by or identical with prostitution, operate as follows :—

At thirteen we get a small and varied batch with causes including bad companions at school, which faintly suggest conclusion of the school life.

At fourteen sexual impulses are the predominant factor and a passion for sweets the second.

At fifteen the relaxation of parental control leaves the girl more at the mercy of bad companions, at work or otherwise, and free to give way to her love of amusement or “ running wild.” The factor of sexual impulses is still maintained.

At sixteen the age of consent is reached. The removal of protection by the law, occurring just when the girl has reached physical maturity, results in the numbers being doubled. Bad companions is the first factor, and sexual desires come second : now vanity and love of personal adornment appear as a motive.

At seventeen, the numbers are half those of the previous year. The factor of sexual impulses has almost disappeared. Bad companions play the leading part.

At eighteen the sexual impulse plays a slight part, and after that it ceases to count until we come to the married women and widows, some of whom become prostitutes when middle-aged.

Choice of the life from a deliberate estimate of the profits does not make its appearance till twenty, twenty-one, and—the age which furnishes most instances—twenty-three.

The examination of so limited a number of cases cannot give us anything more than a hint towards a generalisation. But the indication of these figures

that the appeal of the tawdry things of civilisation is most powerful and most dangerous in the early years of adolescence is corroborated by much of the evidence we have collected. From a variety of informants we learn that there are girls as young as fourteen and fifteen running wild in the places frequented by prostitutes, and themselves soliciting men in many parts of London and of England. We are told on good authority that in one of the manufacturing districts of England any young man of the employer class can have as much sexual intercourse as he wishes without any payment, with girls of about eighteen, either of his own class, or milliners, or shop girls, or mill hands. The same is reported of many of the small country towns. Another man makes a similar statement about a London suburb : in this case the girls are said to be the daughters of respectable shopkeepers who have no idea of what their daughters are doing. We are told that Epping Forest and other open commons are used by girls of presumably inferior social position for similar purposes. At Hampstead a number of young girls go up to the road frequented by the regular prostitutes, much to their disgust, and sell themselves for presents, drinks, sweets, and various amusements.

Dr. James Devon, the Medical Prison Commissioner for Scotland, writes : " When young girls, as a result of their surroundings, take to imitating their elders in vice, they are much more dangerous than boys. Every surgeon in a great city, if he is connected with the administration of the law, knows that very young girls are sometimes made the subjects of horrible assaults ; but he also knows that other girls as young incite and provoke assaults. . . . It is sheer folly to ignore the fact that there are girls of school age in some parts of the city (Glasgow) who deliberately importune men. It is



terrible that it should be so, but they are only doing what they see their elders do, and there is no use in disregarding the fact.”<sup>1</sup>

And Miss Ellice Hopkins also bears witness to the number of adolescent prostitutes, and the extent to which they are actuated by an appetite for pleasure, in the following passage:<sup>2</sup> “The rank and file of those who pass through our penitentiaries are for the most part very young girls, sometimes mere children in years, generally the victims of the bad conditions presented by our large, overcrowded towns—girls whose original fault has begun with nothing greater than unruliness, the idleness, the silly, birdlike vanity, and the reckless love of fun that we sometimes have to contend with in our own girls during the difficult ages of fifteen to seventeen; faults which in them, sheltered by society and the protecting care we are able to throw around them, lead to no permanent evil result; but in those others too often precipitate them down that fearful moral precipice which ever skirts their path.”

The opinions of these authorities in conjunction with the evidence we ourselves have collected make it clear that so far as prostitution is not an economic problem, it is mainly a problem of the management of adolescence.

The perils of adolescence are many. First there are the uncontrollable high spirits of youth, which turn naturally to amusement and take that which lies nearest to hand, whether it be in the cinematograph theatre, the dancing-hall, or the skating-rink. They are accompanied by strong physical appetites, ranging from a greed for sweets and drinks to what Mr. Havelock Ellis describes as the girl's “adolescent explosive and orgiastic

<sup>1</sup> “The Criminal and the Community,” p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> “The Sheltering Arm, the Helping Hand,” Church Army pamphlet.

impulses," which may sweep her on to unpremeditated excesses. And there is, what is likely to be of abnormal and uncritical strength in the drab modern city, the desire to imitate their elders and in particular those who seem to them the most interesting, attractive, and remote from the dreary daily life. These things are to be found among girls of every class. They can usually be diverted from sexual channels by a corresponding development of the intellect and imagination which not only gives fastidiousness to the sexual instinct, but unfolds before them many other interests. But there are circumstances in which they must lead the girl of only the average strength of character a long way towards prostitution.

These are usually the circumstances which surround the adolescence of the working classes.<sup>1</sup> The wealthy parent can provide for the increasing physical energy of his adolescent daughter by letting her hunt or fence or play outdoor games, so she never knows the fierce hunger that the working-girl, who has not yet been devitalised, feels for the delights of the dancing hall. And even if the middle-class girl has an abnormal craving for amusement, she gets it without having to pay for it in any way. But the elementary school child has rarely pocket money for her pleasures, and when she goes to work her wages are usually on the subsistence level. Very often she can buy her amusements, and if she be a homeworker, the leisure to enjoy them, only by selling

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Barbara Drake in an article on "The Girl Worker and the opportunity of the Juvenile Advisory Committee," in the *Women's Industrial News* for July, 1914, says, "The young daughter of the small tradesman, the innkeeper, the clerk, the farmer, the superior artisan, often lives under conditions as sheltered as those in the schoolroom of the upper or middle class . . . she goes out into a new world of employment a gallant but very defenceless young creature."

her sex. The well-to-do girl is not likely to meet undesirable companions in her own home, and meets plenty of attractive, well-dressed and interesting women of her own class. The poor girl cannot be protected by even the most devoted parent from the possibility of meeting bad companions in the streets or in the factory or workshop: and very often, in a class where poverty soon dulls the good looks of the women, the only attractive and brightly clad woman she ever sees is the prostitute. To the girl who is just beginning to look around her, and perhaps to rebel against her lot, anyone who has stepped out of the routine of the wage-earner seems enviable and worthy of imitation.

So this, too, is partly an economic question. It is also partly a question of the different standards of morality laid down for men and women. Boys, too, pass through this period of adolescence and make their blunders. But they are permitted to recover their position in a way that is not permitted to girls. Dr. James Devon deals with this similarity of the symptoms in adolescence in the two sexes and its very different effects, in the following passage:—"Sexual appetite is as natural in a degree to women generally as to men generally. The effect of teaching on its development is important, but, just as many men at some time in their lives run wild, so there is a tendency on the part of the woman to break away. The man, by and by, burns out, and the young rake may become the elderly reformer. The fact that he is known to be a brand plucked from the burning rather helps him than otherwise. In the case of the woman, it is different; if she is discovered, and if she is dealt with by the law, it is exceedingly difficult for her ever to recover a place in society. If she is not discovered, but merely suspected—if she is not dealt with by the law—the tendency is for her to drift away from

the streets just as she drifted into them, and as a matter of fact, this is what occurs in the great majority of cases, only there must be no burning brand about it." The opinion that this decision of society is not just, and that these girls are not irrevocably degraded by their early lapses, is corroborated by the Lady Inspector of H.M. Prisons, who states: <sup>1</sup> "A stream of bright, childish girls passes in and out of the prisons, many of whom are in the power of older and worse people than themselves. . . . In spite of their dreadful experiences they do not differ greatly in (natural) mental and physical development from the better class girls who are growing happily at school and hockey-field while they are qualifying as prison habituals." This binding down of the child to her rash choice is only one aspect of the larger question as to how far the high ideal of sexual conduct held up to women manufactures prostitutes.

The following are cases illustrative of this "appeal of civilisation": where sexual desires play only a secondary part and the girl sold herself as a means to an end, and where this end was not the maintenance of existence, but the enrichment of life by luxury and excitement.

#### AMUSEMENTS

The cinematograph theatre, the dancing-hall, the skating rink, are necessities in the modern city: without them the life of the poor would be intolerably dull and youth would be perverted by repression. But as we have already pointed out these places are doubly dangerous in that many school children and working girls cannot find the money for admission in an honest way, and that they expose a girl to the risks of bad companionship. The Bank Holiday is also a necessity and

<sup>1</sup> Statement quoted on p. 14, "Women and Prisons." Helen Blagg and Charlotte Wilson, Fabian Tract, No. 163.

is, as Mr. Havelock Ellis has pointed out, a survival of the beneficial orgy. But it too has its dangers to a population so broken in to monotonous toil that an interruption means irresponsibility.

When a girl is sated with the ordinary recreations of town life or has a more lively imagination her appetite for amusement may show itself as a wild pursuit of excitement. Either she will run about the streets at all hours with undesirable companions, or will leave home for gayer surroundings. This is especially the case with motherless girls.

As we have pointed out before, a girl who is stated to be "always running after boys" is not necessarily possessed of a strong sexual instinct. We have an instance bearing on this point of a girl who applied at a matrimonial agency and was supplied with money for her railway fare to take her to meet a man, but spent it instead on the irresistible allurements of the local theatre.

W. D. was brought up by grandparents, and on leaving school entered the sweet-making department of one of the great co-operative stores. She took first to going to cinematograph shows with other girls, and then she took to going with boys. Again and again she had sexual relations with them, till at the age of fifteen she was sent to a Rescue Home.

X. C., a North Country girl, is described as "a spoilt, wilful, high-spirited, wild colt." Her father was for thirty-six years in one employment. She was employed irregularly in a dressmaking establishment and slept at home. At sixteen her love of amusement led her to go all lengths. She frequented skating rinks in the evenings, and on several nights a man she met there motored her to a house of ill-fame. On one occasion they went to a neighbouring town for the night. The man gave



her a sovereign, which they spent together on sweets and skating the next day. She told her mother she had been staying with a friend.

Y. B. lived at home with her father, a gardener, who earned good money, and was herself employed as a day girl in a shop at wages of from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a week. She became dishonest in order to get money for cinematograph shows, and from the age of fourteen would have sexual relations with any boy who would treat her to these shows. At sixteen she became a prostitute.

I. G. is the daughter of most respectable parents ; she was well brought up and was confirmed in the Church of England. She is a quick and clever child, although undersized. While still at school, she was sent to a little daily place where she earned 5s. a week. She spent the money on sweets and told her parents that she had not been paid. At fourteen she used to stay away from home for nights together, selling herself to boys for pence until she had got together enough money to indulge her passion for sweets.

G. K., an intelligent girl, was trained by the M.A.B.Y.S and had many situations, at first small ones and afterwards good ones, but lost them through being insolent. At seventeen she " went for a spree " with a man on Bank Holiday ; they took a room in a hotel in Marylebone. At eighteen, unable to keep her situations owing to her bad temper, she became a prostitute, but was sent to a Home in the country very shortly afterwards and seemed to be happy there.

P. K. is a girl in good society. She was found by an acquaintance in a brothel where she had gone to obtain money for the payment of her bridge debts.

O. M., a member of an aristocratic English family, was left when very young without near relations and with little money. She had plenty of friends among

the world to which she belonged by birth. One day she consulted a woman with experience in the working world as to the possibility of obtaining paid work, and in discussing the question mentioned casually that she often went for week-ends with men. The other woman was taken aback and asked her if she was not afraid of the consequences, but the girl asserted that she ran no risks as she only went with gentlemen. She stayed with them in London hotels for the week-end and had great fun. They were rich and would see her through all right if anything happened to her. She said that lots of others did it, and did not seem to feel ashamed of it.

L. O. is a bright, amusing girl. Her mother is dead and she kept house in a Northern town for her father and brother, who are at work, and a little brother still at school. Her home duties were not sufficient occupation for her, and she did casual work at day places, earning about 2s. 6d. a week, which she spent chiefly on music-halls. She ran after boys at night, and would not come in till twelve o'clock. Her father locked her out, and in revenge she stayed away from home for a week. She would let lads treat her to the music-hall, and afterwards they would take a walk and have sexual intercourse. She led three other girls wrong. They were all chased nightly by the police, warned several times, and prosecuted once or twice. Then three of them were sent to prison together in another town, and when they were dismissed at their term's end they became a terror to the City.

B. Y. is the eldest daughter of a poor and very respectable labourer in Newcastle. She worked by day in small places as general servant, to help her father, but is very self-willed and ran the streets at night. At the age of fifteen she would go to any length with men or

boys, just for fun and not for money. At fifteen and a half she was sent by the magistrates to a Rescue Home, as she was not under proper control, and was consorting with prostitutes.

O. L. is the child of a mother who frequently leaves her husband for other men till he follows her, beats her, and brings her back. This couple "marry off their girls quickly to keep them straight." At the age of sixteen O. runs wild, is dishonest, frequents music-halls, and "leads lads into sin and is worse than they are," but does not take money from them.

Q. J. is the daughter of a prostitute in the North of England who has had eight children by different men. Q. was farm servant with a kind and motherly mistress, but at fourteen she was too fond of playing with the lads in the stockyard and afterwards picked up any man who would take her to the Empire. At sixteen she became a prostitute like her mother, but at twenty-one she is married and has two legitimate children beside her eldest illegitimate child, who is in the care of the Guardians. Her husband gives her a black eye if she speaks to a man, for she is, as she says, "his property now."

D. H. was a very pretty, attractive London girl who became a shop assistant in a high-class establishment. Here a man met her, who took her about in taxicabs and gave her a good time. Other men did likewise, giving her suppers and so forth. As she was under sixteen these men were careful to keep on the right side of the law, but indulged in demoralising abnormal practices with her. Her parents suspected that something was going on and warned the police, so D. has been sent to a Home.

## THE QUEST OF ADVENTURE

The boy who runs away to sea is in comparatively little danger. His feminine equivalent is in great danger. There are few openings in life for her, and the very qualities of vitality and enterprise which make her run away render her perilously attractive. Moreover, once she has broken away she is regarded with suspicion and may never be given a chance to get on her feet again. Happily the enterprising girl is often thoroughly capable of taking care of herself.

I. M., from South Wales, had an adventurous spirit, and at the age of thirteen came up to London to "see life." Her parents complained that she was a troublesome girl, beyond their control, and she had previously been sent to a Home in Wales. She was brought one morning to a London Rescue Home by a constable, penniless and homeless, having just been robbed of half-a-crown by a girl to whom she had given a meal. She seemed glad to be helped, but utterly refused to stay in the home, and left with another girl. A month later she returned and implored to be re-admitted. She was sent back to her father in Wales.

S. P. was an intelligent girl with a wandering, roving disposition ; very wild but not naturally immoral. She was placed in a Home at the age of thirteen, but her parents insisted on having her back and sent her to work in a factory, where the moral tone was very bad. S. had a mania for scouring the country on trains, and was amazingly clever at eluding porters and other officials. The free and easy factory life, joined to the natural craving of a young girl for admiration and excitement, proved too much for her when she was eighteen. She is not exactly a prostitute, but has gone quite wrong, probably in London, which she appears to know well,

and she has been a patient in the Lock Hospital. At nineteen she has been lost from observation.

C. G. was an intelligent girl who could always obtain situations in good houses. Her old grandmother, a Wesleyan, told a Rescue worker how C. used to volunteer to go away with men for fun and change from the quiet village life. When very young she became a kitchen maid, first in Yorkshire, then in London, at Cavendish Square. But the love of romance she acquired from novel-reading made domestic service irksome to her, and she gave it up to become a commercial traveller. At sixteen her romantic ideas led her to form liaisons with fellow-travellers in Leeds, Manchester, and elsewhere. At seventeen she seems to have been definitely a prostitute, and after this to have entered a Home and returned to domestic service.

U. Z., born in the Potteries, was always a troublesome and wayward child. She left home at the age of twelve and has been on the stage more or less ever since. At nineteen she had an illegitimate child, whom her parents took as the child's father was dead. She had a second child by an actor, who was ordered to pay 4s. a week for its maintenance. After this she went into domestic service. It is believed that she had a third child and that she is now, at the age of thirty, a prostitute.

### DRESS

It is probably the desire for good clothes and finery which above all else makes the life of prostitution attractive to girls of the poorer classes. And this motive is not so contemptible as it seems.

Dress is primarily a means of self-expression and began as the ornamental feather or the string of shells, and not as the covering needed for warmth or modesty: and although in other times and places it has become essen-



tial for the two latter purposes, it still retains its original aim. The instinct for dress seems twofold. On the one hand it is imitative and inspired by the desire to escape adverse criticism by conformity to fashion. On the other hand it is original and inspired by an ambition. The first development is not to be dismissed lightly with a phrase such as "aping their betters." Every woman will admit if she be candid that in going about the streets she commands respect not by her good looks or her good manners, but by her clothes. The working class girl knows this subconsciously, and her desire for good clothes is a desire for respect. This in itself is entirely admirable: for respect does not only mean a recognition of one's good qualities, but also permission to retain them. In a certain industrial town the factory girls complain that they are paid so badly that the men "do not respect them"; which means that the men regard these ill-dressed and ill-nourished women with such contempt that they enter very lightly into sexual relationships with them and desert them as lightly in time of trouble. When a girl is determined to get this respect and be recognised as a person of value she may turn to prostitution as a means of making money for clothes. An interesting anecdote bearing on this point is told by Dr. James Devon<sup>1</sup>:—

"In so far as a standard of dress is set up that is beyond the earning power of the workers to maintain, girls who have other resources than their wages are liable to exercise an injurious effect on their fellow-worker. X 27 was a young woman of prepossessing appearance and good manners. She had been employed in a place of business in town. Her wages were small, and she had charge of cash transactions to a considerable extent. She was quietly and well dressed. She was

<sup>1</sup> "The Criminal and the Community," p. 150.

arrested on a charge of embezzlement and she admitted her guilt. She confessed that she had begun to take small sums in order to keep herself 'respectable,' and her peculations not being discovered, she had continued to help herself. There was sickness at home, and to relieve the pressure there she had taken larger sums and been found out. In the course of enquiries I found that there were other employees, none of whom had her opportunities of taking from the cash box, but some of whom dressed themselves on 'presents' from gentlemen. There was room for suspicion that each knew what the others had been doing. It was certain that they knew that their earnings were insufficient to enable them to live and dress as they did, and it was equally clear that in their cases they had no resources at home to supplement their earnings."

It may seem strange that girls should be moved by self-respect to sell themselves. But the girl who sells herself for this reason exchanges an intangible chastity which commands little respect, for tangible clothes which do command respect: a proceeding that seems sensible enough to a girl whose circumstances have not developed her fastidiousness.

The other development of the instinct for dress, the desire for distinction in personal adornment, is not as it might appear simply a manifestation of the instinct to attract the opposite sex, for while these two are often interweaved, they are also often interchangeable. The woman who has a passion for dress may be quite indifferent to men. It is as we have said before a manner of self-expression. It adds an element of interest and variety to the personality and it gives an opportunity for gratifying the love of form and colour. To those who are excluded either by inborn limitations, or, as is more often the case, by lack of education and opportunity,

from practising other methods of self-expression, dress must appeal with a force in proportion to the native vigour. It is the romance of life to such as these. And it is as unreasonable for those others who can express themselves in art or social work or parenthood to condemn this natural vanity, as it might be to demand perpetual silence from the Cockney because she cannot speak the correct English of educated people. What we must rather do is to find other channels for this quite honourable human quality by means of education and expansion of the social life. This end has been achieved during recent years among girls of the middle classes, who think much less about dress since they have taken up athletics.

We give a few examples from our collected cases, which are not very graphic, as our informants usually classify this motive as "vanity" without further detail. It is also present in other cases which are ascribed to discontent.

T. K. had a good home, but she dislikes work, and loves finery, especially common jewellery. She was sent to a Home because she stole, and thence went to service, and was afterwards employed at Ealing Hippodrome. She got into debt through her passion for personal adornment, and drifted into prostitution at about twenty-one. She was on the streets in Islington and lived in a common lodging-house.

K. O. was an orphan, and was brought up in Leeds Industrial School. She has been a factory hand at Reading and a domestic servant. She was sexually lax through want of self-control, and while in domestic service she stole. She came into the life of prostitution at twenty-one, through her love of finery and her dislike of domestic work. She left her situation of her own accord, and went to lodge in a house of doubtful reputation at Tottenham.

Z. V., the daughter of decent but very poor parents, is in domestic service. She has a passion for dress, and recently spent three guineas on a summer costume for herself while her mother lacked proper underclothing. Her vanity has led her at sixteen to steal and misconduct herself with men, but she is not a regular prostitute.

#### SOLDIER, SAILOR, AND GENTLEMAN

The attraction of the soldier, the sailor or the gentleman is to be classed with the attraction of the cinematograph, theatre or dress. They are as impersonal objects of the desire for variety and excitement and the cravings of vanity. Just as in ancient Greece or in modern Japan the Hetæra or the Geisha might choose her career, not from sensuality but simply for the opportunities it afforded for intellectual converse and the cultivation of wit, so the lower-class girl who would not permit familiarity from men of her own station may seek the society of men of a superior social position for the sake of their refinement, or of men in uniforms for the sake of its romantic associations. At the outset at least the vague possibilities of the new and unknown world unfolded before her by such men throw a glamour over the transaction, and make her, even if she be of a fastidious type, forget the absence of passion.

The part which is played by the soldier's uniform is important and well-known. In peace time the soldier is, of course, likely to make advances to girls because his lack of engrossing occupation leaves him with abundant energy to spend in "larking" round the town, and in war time they evoke in women a complete feeling of gratitude which frequently expresses itself in the form of a sexual advance. But although the physical development required of him by the recruiting sergeant implies that he is attractive to women of a

sensual type, his uniform is more dangerous than the man in it. A regiment of distinctive uniform will do more harm than a regiment of ordinary redcoats: for example a battalion of the Green-jackets quartered in an Irish garrison received the maledictions of the priest for working more havoc among the women than any other regiment ever quartered there before. A parallel may be found among girls of another class in the popularity of the man in uniform or in a hunt coat at a ball. A better comparison would be the budding "middy" home for the Christmas party: for if age is considered it is indeed at the children's dance that we must mainly seek the prototypes of our young prostitutes.

The following examples illustrate the appeal made by the man who is in some way distinguished above others. In some cases the soldier and not the girl plays the part of prostitute and accepts money from his sweetheart.

X. B. was brought up near Aldershot and went to daily situations. After her mother's death she kept house for her father till he, too, died. At sixteen she was seduced by a soldier. At seventeen she went on the streets through "her own choice, and love of the red coat."

P. K., an intelligent but ill-paid general servant at Portsmouth, walked out with soldiers and sailors, and at nineteen elected to be a prostitute rather than work.

L. P. was in good service in an officer's house. At sixteen she made her first slip after drinking with soldiers. Soon afterwards she was found one night with five soldiers.

O. S. was a good general servant in a garrison town: she was a clever cook, and earned from £18 to £20 a year. At eighteen intimacy with soldiers led her into difficulties, and after this she took service in public-houses for the sake of the higher wages. At nineteen



she became a prostitute. At the age of twenty-five she is the mother of three illegitimate children.

R. V. was an intelligent girl whose parents deserted her as a child, leaving her in charge of her grandmothers. At the age of eighteen, when she was in service near Aldershot, she mixed with bad company, and on her day out got drunk and was seduced by a soldier. She went straight on the streets, owing to drink and her loss of character, but was shortly afterwards received into a Rescue Home and is doing well.

V. Y., an intelligent girl with respectable friends, was a general servant, but at sixteen or seventeen years of age she became "infatuated with soldiers" and had "a mania for men," so went on the streets. A year or two later she entered a Rescue Home.

D. B., an intelligent girl, was in three situations and kept one for three years. At the age of eighteen she was introduced by bad companions to a sailor, and she went straight on the streets. She entered a Rescue Home very shortly afterwards.

K. C. lives with an undesirable step-mother and her father is dead. Although intelligent she was very frivolous from the time she was quite a young girl. She was in daily domestic service. At sixteen or seventeen she "sinned" with two policemen and has since become pregnant.

E. I. was in domestic service. After some undergraduates had paid attention to her her vanity induced her to leave her situation and take lodgings at Cambridge, where she went about with the young men. She entered a Rescue Home in the following year.

H. L., an Oxford girl, flirted with undergraduates and was expelled from the city. She went to London and became a prostitute, going for the most part with gentlemen, and never with lower-class men.

X. S., a tidy and pleasant-looking girl, was housemaid in a boys' school. At seventeen she misconducted herself, and at eighteen she became a prostitute through "vanity and love of young men." She had all the time a good home open to her, so she cannot have been in financial straits.

W. R. misconducted herself at the age of thirteen with better-class schoolboys, through vanity. At fifteen she became a prostitute "by her own fault," but was received into a Home the same year.

### BAD COMPANIONS

Next to the love of dress, and often in conjunction with it, bad companions are the strongest influence that brings the pleasure-loving girl to a life of prostitution. Those who have given us information are not very communicative on the subject, but as a rule the "bad companions" to whom girls attribute their introduction to the life may be taken as being themselves prostitutes, though in exceptional cases they may be simply wild or unprincipled girls who led others with themselves into danger.

Why do young girls, often from respectable homes, choose to consort with prostitutes? Sheer loneliness is probably the answer in cases of domestic servants and shop-girls up from the country. They are glad of any companion who will consent to be friendly and sympathetic, and if, having nowhere to go on their day out, they take walks in parks or public gardens, they are accosted by other girls far more often than by men. But girls who are not lonely, and who might have plenty of respectable friends, are also subject to the fascination of the prostitute, and are often led by their admiration to imitate her manner of living. This admiration is not so strange as might be supposed. It is a mistake

to think that the woman who is attractive to men is usually unattractive to women: unless she is rude to them they, too, will seek her company and pay her homage. The prostitute is often a person of vigour, possibly good-natured, and probably—since it is the business of her chosen profession to please—with a natural bent for being pleasant, and when she comes in contact with respectable and well-bred women who are unaware of her profession her spell often extends to them. The scene between Darling Dora and Bobby's Mother in Mr. Shaw's "Fanny's First Play" is very true to life, as is shown by the following case.

Some years ago, on a certain line of vessels sailing between England and America, two English girls took a two-berth cabin every season for seven or eight voyages and carried on an active business as prostitutes the whole time. They were most popular girls, the life of the ship, and the pets of all the old ladies; "women you could really make friends with," the men used to say. They would pick and choose their men, and a man might pursue them unsuccessfully during a whole voyage. By their earnings as prostitutes they supported a father and a brother who was at a University, while their family believed they were journalists. During the winter they dropped their profession, and the ships' officers would visit them as friends. This was subsequently stopped, and the girls forbidden to use the liners for their business. Afterwards one of the girls was met on the Continent, still successful in her profession.

The prostitute is even more fascinating to the lower-class girl. She has emancipated herself from the routine of the wage-earner: she comes and goes as she will, unchecked by either parents or employers. She enjoys all sorts of luxuries that the ordinary girl cannot afford, and from a distance her intercourse with men may seem

romantic. The poor girl infatuated with a prostitute finds her exact parallel in the middle-class schoolgirl who fills her bedroom with photographs of the latest musical comedy star and dreams enviously of some day enjoying similar fame and its perquisites of admirers, motor-cars, diamonds, and dresses.

Not only does the prostitute attract young and uncorrupted girls, she herself is attracted by them, and unfortunately, once she gets their companionship, she likes to corrupt them. Why she does this is not clear. Of course in some cases the prostitute who is a decoy makes a profit out of the transaction or stands to gain by acquiring an inexperienced and devoted partner. But it is a fact that again and again prostitutes will disinterestedly introduce younger and better equipped rivals into their own profession, although the competition is already fierce. Good nature and a belief that this is doing a kindness is sometimes the motive: for a prostitute who is still able to exert this fascination has not yet suffered from the hardships that her life ultimately brings to most. There is also the feeling, described by Canon Horsley, of the fox who has lost his tail and wants to get all the other foxes to have their tails cut off too.

We have many instances, although all rather meagre in detail, of introduction to prostitution by bad companions. We find case after case of general servants going on the streets in this way, and also a few instances of laundresses who meet dangerous friends at their work. Typical are the cases of a little girl of thirteen who worked in a factory, was misled by bad companions, and became a prostitute at fourteen: another factory girl of fifteen who took to the streets for a living immediately after being led astray by the girls with whom she worked: and another girl of fifteen, who was

demoralised by her fellow-workers in a laundry and became a prostitute at 18. We append a further selection. These cases are compressed into one paragraph as their details are so meagre.

E. G. at the age of fifteen ran away from home owing to the rigid discipline, and went to live with a girl older than herself, through whose influence, although she made a pretence of doing a little charring, she got her living by prostitution. At seventeen she adopted the life openly.

F. D., an intelligent girl, came to London to service in a good lodging-house in Eaton Terrace. At 19 she left, to go and live with a girl whom she did not then know to be a prostitute, and so she entered this life herself.

C. L. was a needlewoman for a Manchester firm, and lodged with a friend of her mother's. When nineteen she met a woman who persuaded her to come and live with her. Eight months later they walked to London together. The woman left her in Hyde Park. A policeman found her and took her to a shelter, but she had already taken the fatal step, and appears to have spent the next two years as a prostitute. She then stayed a year in a Rescue Home and was placed in service. After four days she disappeared, and has since drifted back into homes again and again.

A. C., an intelligent girl, went into a situation as general servant. At sixteen and a half she came under the influence of a woman who lived near her, and kept open house for young people of both sexes. Through the companionship of prostitutes A. became one herself.

#### TEMPERAMENT.

It is impossible to make any generalisations on the part played by temperament. The information given us in the collected life histories is in most cases not sufficiently detailed and intimate to give any indication



of the real personality that moves behind names, dates and incidents. And when we do find a remark of the Rescue Worker which would appear to bear on the character of the prostitute we often find that the remark deals more with the finished product of some years' degradation on the streets than the innate qualities that sent the girl to her fate. When we get a forcible statement such as—"In spite of all our efforts she was not a bit better, and like the Scripture animal 'returned to her wallowing in the mire'"—we reflect that perhaps we have come across a case of that irreclaimable "born prostitute" who will, we are told, inevitably frustrate all efforts to eliminate prostitution. But the girl turns out to have been taken from a home of thieves and prostitutes at the age of seven and brought up in an Industrial School: she was sent out to service at sixteen, and was immediately seduced: she was sent to a Rescue Home but was dismissed in disgrace and returned to her former associates in London. The girl's end is certainly sordid. Here again the case is prejudiced by un-ideal circumstances.

We get, of course, wider generalisations. Many matrons of Rescue Homes tell us that, setting aside the feeble-minded, the girls who come to them at the present day are largely of an emotional temperament, and that they are often artistic, musical, good-natured, and very lovable. "We find the strong, hard-working woman who used to come to us a thing of the past," says the Sister-in-Charge of a Home, "and replaced by a better-educated, but alas! weak-minded, pleasure-loving girl, unable to battle with the difficulties of life." But we must not be too sure that these types preponderate to the same extent among prostitutes in general, for the Rescue Homes draw to them the failures of the profession. And in contradiction to this

we have the evidence of witnesses of many years' experience who tell us that the modern prostitute is more temperate, more cautious, more thrifty, and less hysterical than her prototype of thirty years ago.

It is safer to look for certain tendencies, mainly physiological, which seem likely to lead a woman into temptation. Unfortunately we cannot offer any evidence as to Mr. Havelock Ellis's theory that sexual coldness and indifference or homo-sexuality predisposes a girl to prostitution by depriving the normal sexual relationship of value. On the one hand it is difficult to collect evidence as to negative qualities, and on the other hand much shame is felt, even by the most degraded, about the acknowledgment of homo-sexual tendencies. More reference is made by our informants as to the influence of abnormally strong sexual desires. Nearly all who come into contact with prostitutes at the beginning of their career are agreed that sensuality has very little influence in determining their choice, the only notable dissentient being Mr. Thomas Holmes, the well-known Police Court Missionary. Nor indeed is it found that any large proportion of these girls have their sexual impulses strongly developed later on, when they seek charitable or medical assistance. One medical woman who was attached to a Rescue Home for some years gives the proportion of inmates with strong sexual appetites as one-sixth of the whole, and our own estimate from the collected cases is slightly lower. Where these violent passions are reported they may be the result of the premature sexual experience and misuseage by older persons which we discuss in another chapter: girls in Homes sometimes say that their passions having once been roused by such means, or by seduction in early adolescence, they have since found it impossible to resist the impulses which move them at times. And

in other cases where strong sexual desires are detected in the inmates of Rescue Homes they may be due to the shock of complete abstinence after a long period of abnormal sexual activity. But apart from external stimulation and habit these impulses occasionally arise spontaneously. It is clear that there are in every class girls who either by faulty training or congenital disposition are possessed by uncontrollable promiscuous passions which they must gratify however much it distresses their relatives and even themselves. As such impulses are usually strong at the onset of puberty (between the ages of fourteen and sixteen) and subside again to quiescence until re-awakened by stimulation, commonly in marriage, and are obviously at their most dangerous point when the character is still undeveloped, this, too, is largely a question of the management of adolescence. And it is to be remarked that even in cases of nymphomania the woman would very probably not choose a regular life of prostitution were she not forced into it on discovery by exclusion from other occupations.

Many writers have dwelt on the effects of alcohol on women, which increases the sexual appetite and at the same time paralyses both the higher inhibitions and the power of resisting the desires of a man. Drink plays little part in inducing the young to choose prostitution as a career, though it is used by those who desire to seduce a girl to overcome her first resistance. The question as to how far it influences older women is complicated by the fact that a prostitute cannot long continue in her occupation without screwing up her nerves by drugs or alcohol. But in the case of the married woman whose husband is absent, or the widow, it is undeniable that drink may give just the extra degree of stimulation that makes a woman give way to her desires. The widow who has an illegitimate child will tell the relieving officer who

asks her why she yielded to temptation: "Well, miss, the truth is I had had a drop." Later on we give a few exceptional instances we have received where drink was the direct cause of the prostitution of young women. But it would seem that for the most part drink is a factor which is not found by itself but which acts very powerfully in conjunction with other factors such as sexual desire or loneliness.

The "work-shy" man, whose peculiar temperament presents so insoluble a problem to social reformers, has his female counterpart in large numbers, which may be accounted for by the small choice of occupations before the working girl and the habit of thrusting girls into service whether they like domestic work or not. As is shown by the large proportion of our histories in which "sheer idleness" is mentioned as the chief cause, the "work-shy" girl turns very readily to prostitution. Work is unpleasant: then why work when one can get food and clothing in another way? The logic is irresistible, particularly if one happens to be a moral imbecile. But this brings us to the factor which we discuss in the chapter on the feeble-minded.

We can say that a temperament influenced by these tendencies is undoubtedly predisposed to prostitution: more than that we cannot say. If we walk through Leicester Square or any other place frequented by prostitutes the women we meet present just as many variations of feature and figure as would a corresponding number of respectable woman, though there is a superficial similarity caused by the use of cosmetics and their simultaneous adoption of the current fashion. It is a fair assumption that they may be as diverse in temperament.

H. S. experienced sexual feelings at eleven or twelve years of age. At thirteen she seduced her sister's sweet-

heart in a very crude manner and has never since missed the opportunity of sexual intercourse. She has sometimes been kept by one man at a time, but even then would go out secretly and meet other men. She is no longer young, has had syphilis, and has depended on poor relief.

I. R. is the daughter of a doctor. She came home from school at about thirteen or fourteen pregnant by a soldier whom she had met at a pier entertainment and who had taken her away for the night. She has flirtations with every man she comes across, such as tram conductors, and is still a great trouble to her family.

J. Q. came from a good home and began by doing daily work, but as her people could not keep her in at night they sent her to resident service. At her first place in a smart West End Square she was dismissed for misbehaving with the men servants. At her second place, in Bloomsbury, she left with an unsatisfactory character on the death of her master. From her third situation she was dismissed with a bad character. In her fourth she is known to have had men to her room while the household was asleep. At seventeen she became a prostitute.

K. P. is a clever girl. Her father is woodman on a large estate where strict rules as to morality are enforced, no girl who has "gone wrong" being allowed in the estate cottages and any man who has "got a girl into trouble" being forced to marry or leave. She was a farm servant, and could always get places at £16 or £18 a year when she was sixteen years old. She would not keep away from men at this age, and finally slept out two nights on the barrack road. After this the police took her to a rescue worker.

R. L. was born before her mother married. She is full of life and energy, which is now being directed into



wholesome channels. She was at fourteen in farmhouse service at a wage of £10 a year. Her master's son first seduced her. Her mother found her another situation, but soon discovered that here she was too intimate with the groom and was planning to run away with a lad of seventeen. At fourteen and three-quarters she was taken in hand by an experienced rescue worker.

U. F., an intelligent, honest, adventurous girl, came from a strict home in Birmingham. Her father was a mechanic in a bicycle factory, and she worked there too till she was twenty, and then lived at home looking after her mother. At the age of nineteen she was seduced under promise of marriage; she was probably a good deal to blame herself, for she strikes the informant as naturally promiscuous, and she owns that she was largely actuated by curiosity. The man jilted her after the banns had been read, her mother died in childbirth, and U. would not stay at home after having been jilted. She came up to London and took up prostitution because she liked it. She was seen a little later, before she was twenty-one. She was not doing very well as a prostitute, but was managing to pay her way.

M. V. was born in London and was brought up in a very bad drunken home. She is very cool in manner and superficially smart, and seems honest and calculating. She became a barmaid, and was often out of work: this is, we are told, "one of the conditions of the trade; a barmaid seldom stays for any length of time in any one position and re-engagements are hard to get." Like all good-looking barmaids she was constantly pestered with invitations from customers, mostly with one end in view. She was finally seduced under promise of marriage by a man who turned out to be already married. Our informant is of opinion that she would have lapsed in whatever calling she had happened

to be, owing to her nature and upbringing. She admitted that curiosity had a good deal to do with her first slip. She continued as a barmaid after her first experience, but drifted into prostitution definitely when twenty-two, owing to want of money and unemployment. She is now twenty-five and lives with her mother, whose only concern appears to be lest she should become pregnant and so be unable to earn anything. She had been drunk the night before she was met.

A. F. came from a very respectable home, and her father was gamekeeper on a large estate. She was walking out with a young man, and asked him to take her to a hotel for the night. She says that she "wanted to know what it was all like," and that "he was far more shy than I was." She became a prostitute; at the same time she kept up relations with her first lover, and had two or three children by him. She eventually came to great desperation and distress and sought help from a rescue worker.

H. C., a quiet-looking, middle-aged woman, told her history to a clergyman after a sermon. She is the daughter of a publican and was well educated. She became a hospital nurse, and the last situation she had was in a workhouse. She first went wrong with a man who promised to marry her, and had a child to whom she is devoted. She got a post at a country dispensary and there made the acquaintance of a common labouring man. She went away with him and had a second child.

B. G. was a good general servant who could always get work. At the age of twenty she sold herself for 10s. to a "gentleman" in Manchester, through "uncontrolled passion and lust." This man took her to Blackpool, and they lived together till both were tired. She then kept herself by prostitution. When ill she would go for a time into a Home and when tired of it would

make herself so obnoxious that she was dismissed. She drinks and has uncontrollable sexual desires.

F. K. was the only child of very respectable people and her father was a photographer: she was very much spoilt. At eighteen she married a young man, and went to live with his mother, but did not get on with her. The husband's salary was not large, so they were apt to be short of money. During the first year of her married life this young woman went out as a prostitute every night. She was exceedingly pretty and loved admiration. On the streets she met some young men who were very wealthy, and she used to go to them at a large hotel. She had no sense of shame about the life, which was highly attractive to her. At the end of a year she became pregnant and told some romance about herself to one of her clients, who approached a rescue worker on her behalf. This lady found her living with her husband and mother-in-law, neither of whom had any suspicion of the life she was leading. She had told them that the money she brought home came from a rich uncle or aunt. The shock the discovery gave her relations and her love for her baby led her to abandon her ways and she has since led a moral life.

Mrs. E. J., the wife of a sailor, lived at Poplar. During her husband's absences she used to go about with sailors. She also applied for outdoor relief for her children, but it was ultimately discovered that her husband was sending her money all the time.

Mrs. C. H. was the wife of a man in good employment in an urban district of recent development in Surrey. There was no doubt that she was leading the life of a prostitute, and at the age of forty-five was reported to be enticing boys away.

Mrs. G. L. is a jolly sort of woman and apparently lives

most happily with her husband, who earns 25s. to 30s. a week, most of which he probably spends on himself. Their children are all grown up and most of them out in the world. Mrs. G. L., now between forty and fifty years of age, sometimes dresses herself up and goes out on the streets. She earns money in this way, but probably her chief motive is love of excitement.

H. M. was at eighteen general servant in a public-house at Liverpool, and she began to drink so heavily that she disliked work. She became a prostitute, thinking it would be an easier life than service. She went to live in furnished rooms in a street of very bad repute in Manchester.

J. O. was in service and was for six years a cook-general at a wage of £20 a year. She took to drink and at twenty-eight became a prostitute. She is a tall, handsome woman: she makes a good deal of money from racing men and she would not miss ——— Races for anything. She has since been in an Inebriates' Home.

I. N., who lived in Islington, was a respectable girl and worked in a factory to help her mother. Her hours were about 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., and her wages about 12s. a week. Our informant says that she liked her work and had no wish to leave it. When twenty-two she first "went wrong" through drink and bad company. She lost her job when she was twenty-eight through drink, "because she could not do her work well, and did not keep her time in the morning." She then became a prostitute.

K. P., a Scotchwoman who had a very good situation, became a prostitute through drink and immoral tendency. She was on the streets intermittently for eight or nine years, when not in an Inebriates' Home or in small situations.

L. O. is a very selfish and untruthful woman with an uncontrolled appetite. She would do just the work she liked and would sacrifice anything and everything for pleasure and comfort. She occasionally worked as a temporary shop assistant at sales. She lived with an invalid mother and went for short periods to different married men as housekeeper during the illness or absence of their wives. Her first sexual lapse occurred when she was twenty-eight, owing to weakness of will and need of money for herself and her mother. She became a prostitute through "love of money, ease and comfort, laziness and pride." At the age of thirty-two she had become pregnant ; her invalid mother was still dependent on her.

T. R. is the daughter of a tradesman in a country town. She would not work and her father told her she could not stop at home idle any longer. She took situations, but always gave them up very soon. Then she was servant to an educated woman with whom she became very friendly. After two months she said to this lady that she thought she was going to leave. Asked why, she said she didn't like working. "But what will you do?" asked her mistress. "Oh!" she replied, "I shall soon find some man." "But you wouldn't marry any man!" The girl replied that she should not marry him ; her plan was to go as servant to an hotel or some place of that sort and find a man who would keep her. She could not be dissuaded and carried out her intention.

We may notice four other cases of domestic servants (one a daily worker), who became prostitutes from laziness and from a disinclination for a regular life, regular work, and especially for domestic service. One of these four girls had been spoilt at home, another had been ill-treated and neglected, and a third had "undesirable relations,"



## GAIN

The choice of prostitution for the sake of gain is unique among these factors in impelling not the woman who is put at a disadvantage by unprotected adolescence, loneliness or abnormal physiological conditions, but the woman of mature age.

We know that a certain proportion of prostitutes take to the life because they think it means ease, luxury, and money. We do not know how many of these women have their ambitions satisfied. Certainly the majority of stories we have collected point to a life of squalor and destitution, but as we have pointed out before we deal chiefly with the failures of the profession. It is difficult for the woman investigator to gain access to those who are not failures, who are still prospering in their business or have left it for a reputable establishment in commerce or in marriage. Here we have nothing to go on except partial and unverifiable observation or hearsay.

There appears to be a belief among prostitutes that many members of their calling have made good marriages and that some have even married into the peerage. A woman of this class has been heard to state that a woman has better matrimonial chances than if she remains respectable, and that "men don't mind what the woman they marry has been" so long as she has not been depraved by her life. Such talk is probably merely the ordinary stock-in-trade of the procuress, but we have at least one well-authenticated case of this sort where a prostitute of gentle birth married a country squire. We hear also of a hospital nurse, the daughter of a professional man, who became a prostitute, making £8 or £10 a week and sometimes not so much out of a clientèle largely consisting of undergraduates, and afterwards married a rich man. And we have been told of a woman

of foreign extraction and probably low birth who married a business man with an income of about £800 a year. It will be observed that the English women married men from a class similar to their own.

But if we exclude the speculative possibilities of a good marriage we find that the prostitute has not much hope of gratifying a taste for riches. There are exceptional successes. We know of one woman of good birth who has made £2,000 a year ever since her divorce and has now, at the age of thirty-seven, provided for her old age by persuading one of her foreign clients, who has influence, to cede her large tracts of land. We know of another prostitute who was able to maintain a large and well-furnished home, dress magnificently, and spend much ready money on travelling. Although of unprepossessing appearance she collected a large number of wealthy clients by going to the stalls of theatres and music-halls in expensive and conspicuous clothes and dropping her visiting-cards in front of any man who seemed interested in her. This case suggests that success in the occupation does not depend on the possession of qualities usually considered sexually attractive, and another prostitute who is able to spend £250 on the rental of her flat is a morphomaniac and, although originally beautiful, is emaciated and frenzied to an unpleasant degree. She is a divorcée who was cast adrift by her family with a lump sum of money. At the same time we hear of another prostitute who is beautiful, healthy, musical and a good conversationalist, who cannot keep up a flat of more than £80 a year rental, and even then finds it difficult to make ends meet. We may find an explanation in the fact that unlike the other cases cited she had no wealthy friends to begin with and no money ; in this, as in any other business, it is essential to start with capital or a good connection.

But even in the cases where this basis is present the financial position does not seem to be satisfactory. The expenditure of the fashionable prostitute is enormous. She must have a good house or flat in a central position and good servants ; a first-class maid and a first-class cook are essential to her business. She must go about a great deal and make herself noticeable and attractive by her clothes and her jewels. On the other hand her earnings are apt to be uncertain and irritatingly often not in gold but in kind. She cannot press a client for payment, and when it does come it may be a dress she does not want at the moment, or furs, jewels, or plate which she must keep for a time out of compliment to the donor, and that she will never be able to sell for more than a fraction of their real value. These are details that are not likely to be foreseen, so it is possible that the external brilliance of a fashionable prostitute's life attracts some women. It is also possible that here and there a woman of exceptionally strong character and intelligence may put her business on a sound financial footing. It is also possible that a certain number of women induce their clients, either by blackmail or affection, to give them capital with which to start a business. But failing this it seems unlikely that the margin between income and expenditure should be sufficient to guarantee comfort and security after retirement. This is borne out by the evidence of a witness who claims to have known most of the fashionable prostitutes of the last fifty years, and declares that he has only known half-a-dozen to reach middle age in comfortable circumstances.

The humbler prostitute who works in Leicester Square and the less reputable restaurants has of course fewer expenses, but she has also smaller fees and a less steady clientèle, and she runs a slight risk of arrest, and a

considerable risk of disease. Like all prostitutes she must pay an exorbitant rent.

A still lower grade of prostitute has very few expenses, but she has smaller fees and still more variable clientèle, and runs a heavy risk of arrest, and very heavy risk of disease. The working-girl who becomes a prostitute seldom climbs out of the ditch of poverty, even though she may seem to have bettered herself pecuniarily for a few years. She is also exposed to violence and injury from drunken clients and associates. We select four typical cases in which desire for gain seems to have been the determining motive.

F. was working in her married sister's clothing shop at £30 a year. At the age of twenty-two she discovered that "she could easily earn £400 a year by making men happy," and at the age of twenty-five was still thriving in her new *métier*. She is careful and has never had disease. One of her clients, corresponding with a public speaker on the Social Evil, estimates that she will probably be able to continue for another ten years, and he thinks she is saving money.

Two girls, P. N. and R. P., apparently the daughters of respectable people in the provinces, came to London together with the deliberate intention of becoming prostitutes. They have not made a success of it, probably because, as a friend says, "they began by trying Piccadilly and they are really more the Strand cut." They have since tried the streets in many parts of London, but have had no luck. They are over £1 in debt, are deeply mortified by their failure, for they gave up everything to lead this life, and are very anxious to get out of it.

K. M. was a cultured, travelled woman, who lived under an assumed name in a flat. She was successfully earning money by prostitution and was saving up in

order to start a business of her own elsewhere. She frequented music-halls for business purposes ; she talked to men there and gave them her card.

M. O. says that her home was a good one. Her father was a gas fitter and she went to work in a factory regularly for three years, at a weekly wage of 11s. Then she married, and had one child, who died at the age of twelve months. When she was twenty-eight her husband deserted her, and she took a baker's shop. However she thought she could do better by prostitution, and says that she took to it of her own free will, because she thought it an easy life. She is disappointed, as her earnings have not been what she expected. She has taken to drink, has been in the workhouse, and looks much older than she really is.



## CHAPTER IV

### HOMELESSNESS

IN earlier chapters we have seen how the glamour surrounding prostitution attracts some girls as the flame attracts the moth, and how some are compelled to enter it by the will of another person. We shall now see how others who at the outset regarded it as by no means a desirable way of living, fall into it by accident. As we have already pointed out, such classification is arbitrary : for many girls, if not most, come under two or even three of these headings. But even if arbitrary such classification is convenient in affording a clue through the tangle of motive and fact, even though it provides only an inadequate description of the psychological state of any particular woman at the time that she took the plunge into prostitution.

We have already considered the cases of the girl whose home is morally unsatisfactory, and of the girl who deliberately leaves her family for adventure or excitement. We must now consider the case of the girl who finds herself temporarily or permanently without family ties, and for that reason falls into a way of life that she would not otherwise adopt. Such a girl suffers from her homelessness in more than one way. Most obviously, she is at an economic disadvantage in that she lacks a temporary haven should illness or unemployment overtake her : and probably her wages are calculated or rather

justified by her employer on the supposition that she is living at home and is partially supported by her relatives. And a material danger to the homeless girl lies in the difficulty of obtaining suitable lodging, and of knowing the character of the house into which she is going when temporarily out of a situation. If she has been keeping bad companions, she is likely to turn to them for help, and thus to fall entirely under their influence: the girl who goes to share a room with a friend, not knowing that she is a prostitute, frequently follows before long in the friend's footsteps. And even should she have been discreet in the choice of her friends and have led a model life in every way, she is likely to come to grief if she goes to a common lodging-house. Much has been said and written about common lodging-houses.<sup>1</sup> It is well known that many of these are inhabited mainly by prostitutes and are a favourite hunting-ground of the procurers. The girl who goes to such a place is likely to become familiarised with loose conduct till it becomes an easy step for her to go on the streets and lead the life that has been painted in glowing colours for her by her fellow-lodgers. Quite as dangerous is any resort to the mixed workhouse, in which the girl is liable to suffer a similar deterioration from being herded with older women of varying degrees of immorality.

But one must not lose sight of the mental and emotional dangers in the situation of the homeless girl. The bewilderment of the country girl astray in a large city is not less important than her empty purse. The girl who has left her home may be moved by the bitterness and exasperation arising out of the family quarrel to a mood of utter recklessness. The bereaved girl may be led by the loneliness of a solitary life to form

<sup>1</sup> "Glimpses into the Abyss," and "Where shall She Live?" by Mrs. Higgs. "The Nation's Morals," by various authors, etc.

friendships, sometimes not unwisely, with those who will receive her when introductions to those she would fain be received by are lacking. And for other women the loss of loved ones, by death or otherwise, makes life absolutely purposeless, and removes all motive for restraint.

The dangers that arise out of sheer loneliness, quite apart from its causes, in the case of a young girl without friends or employed at a distance from them, will be recognised at once. This point has been forcibly brought out by Miss Jane Addams in "A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil." But perhaps its strength may best be realised if we take an example of its operation in the case of one who by reason of class and sex was not forced to sexual experience by either economic pressure or seduction in the ordinary sense of that word. A young man of twenty-five, who had been at a public school and University and now lives in London, was questioned as to the point of view of his set with regard to prostitution. He said that that sort of thing did not appeal to most of them ; not that public opinion was against it, for one or two who went in for it were thought no worse of on that account, but—as he put it—"when you used and developed your brain the more animal side of your nature was kept under." For himself, living with his parents and having plenty of congenial society, he felt no need for that sort of thing. However, he felt it would be different later on, when he went abroad. The men of his set when in other countries were accustomed to associate with some woman, sufficiently well educated and attractive to be a real companion, with whom they could go about quite openly, public opinion among his set permitting this when abroad, though not in London. He felt he would need a companion of this sort from sheer loneliness when he had to part from his parents

and friends. If loneliness drives a young man of so many interests and resources to seek out exciting companionship, one may realise to what desperate expedients it may drive the shop-assistant, or that most isolated figure of modern industry, the general servant.

Such are the effects of homelessness. The following are some histories illustrating the various causes that bring it about.

### UNHAPPY HOMES

The crude causes of unhappiness in the home hardly require enumeration. Drunken and immoral parents often lose the normal human feeling of affection for their offspring, and no doubt the entrance of a step-parent often disturbs the harmony of the home. The unhappy position of the illegitimate child, at best likely to miss much that falls to the share of the one whose mother is a respected wife, and perhaps loathed by her mother as the cause of her ostracism, is discussed in the chapter on Seduction and Desertion. But there are many children who, though born in wedlock into decent family life, yet find their homes intolerable. It may be that the parents have some strict theory, religious or otherwise, which they try to enforce with total disregard for the natural expansive instincts of young people. Or it may be that the mother, devoted to her babies, persecutes with a jealous resentment the child who, at ten years of age or so, begins to show an unmistakable tendency to commit the crime of growing up. The children of such parents may be so irritated by the mere atmosphere of the home that they run away : or it may be that they commit some slight fault, and are deterred from returning home by dread of severe punishment. But it must be noted in this connection that it is not only the child of strict parents who is afraid to go home after breaking the parental rules : the over-indulged are just

as likely to lack moral courage when it has come to the point where a scolding cannot be evaded. And on the other hand children are often tiresome and irritating to a degree that taxes to the full the patience and even the affection of their parents. This must be remembered when we come across cases of parents who turn their daughters out of doors. For they are sometimes obliged to do so as the only way of forcing the girls to work and support themselves, though the results may be serious in the case of a girl lacking in resource and courage. Incompatibility of temper among relatives is of course the most ordinary thing in the world, and is perhaps likely to become more acute in proportion to the vigour and enterprise of the family. But the bitterness of such disagreement is immeasurably enhanced by the fact that the disputants are bound by real ties of affection and habit, and by the conventional theory that relatives should live in amity and that this want of harmony is therefore unnatural.

E. L. was living with her parents at Camden Town and did daily work at a factory or in service. But her mother was unkind to her, and at the age of sixteen she ran away from home. Somehow she was led on to the streets and was a prostitute in Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. After three months she was rescued and returned to her parents.

A. K. was doted on by her father, but quarrelled with her mother, whom she absolutely hated. So she left home and somehow got on to the streets. After a time A. wrote to her parents that she was tired of the life, and asked if her father would forgive her. He was broken-hearted about it and sent for her to come home. But she ran off again on catching sight of the rescue worker whom they had asked to come to meet her. Finally after some years she entered a Home.



H. U., from Stratford-on-Avon, was a general servant and had also worked in a factory. When twenty-two she was unable to get work, and there was constant trouble at home because she could not get on with her step-brother. Consequently she yielded to temptation and eventually became a prostitute at Birmingham.

F. E., living at home with her family in the City Road, worked in a large book-folding establishment. She worked about twelve hours a day and earned about 8s. a week. She was often out of work. It is believed that she worked under a foreman, and her fellow-workers belonged to a very rough class of girl. Her father was very strict. When she was eighteen she was out late one night and he punished her, so the next time she was late she would not go home at all. A man then spoke to her, and took her home to a woman he was living with. After three days the woman took her out at night, and she had to give up her earnings by prostitution to these two people. F.'s mother asked a rescue worker to help her. She went into a Home, and after two years there went into service. She is now married and living most respectably.

N. R. is the daughter of respectable parents in London, who indulged her in every way, being anxious that she should have everything that other girls had, whether they could afford it or no. She loved attention, was always fond of dress and of wearing sham jewellery, and would romance about her parents and magnify her social position to her friends. When eighteen years of age she at last induced her father, whom she had long teased on the subject, to allow her to go with her young man to a concert, instead of accompanying her parents to evening chapel. The young people were still out together when they discovered it was very late. The girl, being deceitful and lacking in moral courage, was

afraid to go back to either her situation or her parents. The young man took her to a lodging and left her for the night quite properly, but the next day she still did not know what to do. Some woman then got hold of her, and her father, who was in despair, found her a week later in a shocking state : she was drugged and half drunk and her hair was matted. The father refused to let the matted hair be cut off, and himself spent several evenings in getting it clean and in order.

H. I. did domestic or factory work. When she was about sixteen her stepmother turned her out because she would not keep her places. She shared a room with an immoral woman and was for some months on the streets.

A. T. was the child of very poor parents in London. Her father had to keep his old mother in Wiltshire and six of his children died. A. lived at home, and went to a daily place as servant. When eighteen she was out of a situation and could not get work. She got careless and took to bad companions and deliberately went on the street. Her parents did not know of the life she was leading, but they objected to her late hours and would not have her at home any more. She was admitted to a home in the following year.

I. P. ran away from her home in the country when she was seventeen, because her stepfather was unkind to her. She says that she went to some rooms in the Harrow Road that a policeman at King's Cross told her about. She went round looking for work, but as she had no reference, she could get nothing. Her money all went, she had nothing to eat, and could not pay for her room. Then another girl, who was lodging in the same house, told her how she could earn it, and took her at night to Piccadilly Circus, where, she says, she got plenty.

## ORPHANS

The following are histories of girls left without friends or protectors at an early age.

The parents of E. N. went to America when she was eight, leaving her with an aunt. Her aunt died when she was fourteen and left her friendless. Thereupon a girl with whom she had a speaking acquaintance introduced her to a bad house.

M. I., from a Yorkshire town, had no home. She worked in a cocoa factory and lived in lodgings. When sixteen she became very anæmic and left the factory. She had not been trained for domestic service. At seventeen she went to Leeds and there got into a brothel, where she "got quite a lot of money, for she was new and clean." The reasons she took this step were want of money, want of a home, and want of moral courage to return to her birthplace, where her Sunday School teacher and others would have helped her. She eventually wrote to the teacher, who rescued her. She passed through a home, did well in service, and is engaged to be married to a respectable man.

## TEMPORARY HOMELESSNESS

We need hardly point out that the girl from the country,<sup>1</sup> dazzled by the unfamiliar glamour of a gay life and ignorant of the dangers that lie behind it, falls an easy victim to the evilly disposed. She is doubly exposed to temptation if she has come up to town as domestic servant in a small household, for such employment fails utterly to provide her with the companionship of other young people.

<sup>1</sup> This is a point strongly emphasised by most writers on prostitution. We abstain from emphasising the fact because the sources from which our examples are drawn are scattered over England, and we, therefore, have little evidence on this point to offer.

T. K., a girl from the country, was in service in London. She had nowhere to go on her day out, and was looking in a shop window when a man spoke to her. This led to her ruin.

A. Q. came up from the country to a situation, but could not find the place she was to have gone to, when she got to London. A man then said he would show her where to go, and ruined her. After that she felt that nothing mattered and that she couldn't possibly go home, so she went on the streets.

O. N., a domestic servant of weak character and not much intelligence, came up from the country, and because, our informant says, "she did not know London," drifted on to the streets at the age of twenty-three, staying in disreputable lodging-houses.

I. L. was in domestic service, and was not often out of work. At eighteen, when leaving a situation, she went to stay with a young girl whom she knew, and found herself in a common lodging-house. After a bit she went out with this girl on the streets and gave up all idea of going back to service. At twenty-one she entered a home and after that returned to domestic service, where she was last heard of as having done well for twelve months.

A. X., a shop-girl now in a home, was in two situations, each for several years, and was led away by a man. She was living on ros. a week by herself, and the loneliness was so awful that she was ready to do anything for companionship.

V. A. was one of a large family and her father was an invalid. At nineteen she left home to help her family, and was at the cash desk in a dry-cleaning and laundry establishment in a provincial town. "Gentlemen" used to bring in jobs to be done, and there was hardly one, she says, who didn't ask if he could take her home

in the evening. She stood out for a long time, and then got desperately lonely and homesick. Then there came along a man in a good social position who was on the Town Council, and held various official positions. The girl was simple and thought that he was so much above her that he was merely being kind to her, but in the end he seduced her and she became pregnant.

### THE SAVED

We may judge how accidental is the fall of the homeless girl, and how largely it is a matter of circumstance rather than of her own nature, from the following stories of girls who were saved simply because they came in contact with kindly people in their time of peril.

S. I. came up from the country to a situation in London, but on arrival found it was one she could not take. A policeman found her late at night. "Don't you speak to another soul," he said, "it's the women you have to be afraid of as well as the men," and sent her to a Refuge for the night.

O. F., a country girl, was found destitute one night by a policeman. "You don't look up to much," he said to her, and made her eat his own sandwiches. After this he told her to follow him at a certain distance, and when he came to the end of his beat he passed her on to another constable. Thus she was passed along safely all the way from West London to the Euston Refuge.

P. K. was a very pretty and intelligent orphan girl employed in a tobacconist's shop and "lived in." She made the acquaintance of three young medical students, who used to take her out motoring. On one of these expeditions the motor broke down late one evening in a village miles away, and they all had to spend the night



in the inn. Her employer refused to accept her excuses, and at once turned her out without a character. She was absolutely homeless and had nothing saved. Her three friends were very remorseful for their share in her disgrace and, though young and not well off, found her a room and promised her five shillings a week each, until she could find work. But the girl had no special training and with her doubtful story, and no character, found it impossible to get a respectable situation. In the end one of them paid to have her taught sweet-making, at which occupation she did very well, and she afterwards married a rich man.

## CHAPTER V

### SEDUCTION AND DESERTION

THROUGHOUT this volume illustrations abound of the various ways in which girls take the first step from virginity. It is comparatively rare for this first step to be an act of prostitution, that is, to be undertaken for gain: nor does it, except in a small proportion of instances, lead to prostitution. For it must not be supposed that in all or perhaps even the majority of cases girls regard this first step with shame. Those classes which cherish the ideal of strict chastity for all unmarried women usually guard their daughters carefully at home or in school from free association with men until the dangerous years of adolescence are passed and they are self-protected by habits of restraint and fastidiousness and an understanding of the grave consequences to a woman of pre-marital unchastity. But these classes form a much smaller part of the English nation than they realise. It is undoubtedly the case that in many districts, chiefly rural, pre-marital sexual freedom is less the exception than the rule: that it is in these places the custom among honest and self-respecting young people for sexual relations to follow engagement, and for marriage to be delayed until the birth of a child is expected.<sup>1</sup> This is totally different from the sordid

<sup>1</sup> See Westermarch's "History of Human Marriage," p. 22, for some account of various tribes and peoples amongst whom true conjugal life does not begin until after the birth of a child.

promiscuity which springs of the degrading conditions of life among very poorly paid industrial workers in urban districts or in overcrowded rural cottages and—strange as it may seem—is compatible with sincere religious and moral principles.<sup>2</sup> A well-known example of this is the so-called “island-custom” of Portland, which lasted well on into the nineteenth century ; according to this custom a woman lived with her lover until pregnant and then married him ; she was always strictly faithful to him while living with him, but if no pregnancy occurred the couple might decide that they were not meant for each other, and break off relations. The result was that for a long period of years no illegitimate children were born, and few marriages were childless. In this particular district the custom broke down because London workmen who were brought to the Portland quarries took advantage of the “island custom” but would not fulfil their obligations when pregnancy occurred. But in other rural communities, not so exposed to contact with strangers, the ancient custom persists, thinly veiled out of respect for the (Christian) ideals of the economically superior classes. Seduction by itself will not drive a girl to prostitution in such districts, and indeed prostitution will be markedly absent.

But even where this custom obtains illegitimate motherhood is regarded as a misfortune. Not only does the woman have to bear the whole economic burden of the child, but she suffers a certain contempt as one who has given herself incautiously, or who has

<sup>2</sup> H. Ellis' “Psychology of Sex,” Vol. 6, speaks of the trial marriage system as very ancient and widespread, dating so far as Europe is concerned from the time when the Church first sought to impose ecclesiastical marriage, so that it is practically a continuation of the ancient European custom of private marriage.

failed to give satisfaction as a mate and get power over her man. But one may safely say that in these districts neither the illegitimate child nor its mother is at a serious disadvantage with other children or mothers, except in so far as the economic and personal partnership of a father may be lacking, or when they are brought into contact with other classes of the community possessed of a stricter code. Obviously in such cases illegitimate motherhood will rarely lead to prostitution. Moreover, in many localities, as witnesses from certain of the Welsh counties and other mining districts have assured us, an illegitimate birth may merely mean that a marriage has had to be postponed because of insufficient housing accommodation: and, similarly, temporary unemployment often prevents a couple from setting up house. In cases such as these the mother suffers merely a temporary inconvenience, and would suffer even less were she and the father able—as they would be in almost any country except England—to legitimatise the child by their subsequent marriage. While they are unable to do so a high illegitimate birth-rate is of little value as an index to the morals of a district. It may on the one hand indicate that the district is ravaged by promiscuity and seduction. It may on the other hand indicate that bad housing conditions and trade slackness are temporarily interfering with the smooth running of the ancient institution of trial marriage. We see, for instance, that promiscuity and seduction do not account for the high illegitimate birth-rate in Dresden and Vienna when we learn that two-thirds of such births are legitimatised by the subsequent marriage of the parents.

It is not our business to discuss at this point the merits of various marriage customs. But it must be realised that the relation of seduction to prostitution varies enormously with local public opinion in regard to the pre-

marital chastity of women. The seduced girl who knows that her family, her neighbours, and all her class hold unchastity to be a grave sin, feels her disgrace—particularly if she is going to have a child—to be almost as complete as if she were already a prostitute, if indeed she realise that in the obscure shadows called ruin there are degrees and depths. Such a girl may be turned out of her home or pride or fear may forbid her to face her family, especially if they have disapproved of her lover from the first. She may lose her employment. She may lose her character. And last, but not least, she may be so upset by the worry and shock of what is, as all her class considers, such an overwhelming catastrophe, that she may become reckless and turn her back on what avenues of hope still lie open to her.

Of course it does not follow because a girl gets into trouble through a man that she was heartlessly seduced. Such cases occur, but the sentimental notion that the man is entirely responsible is hardly borne out by enquiry. Young people of both sexes are often deplorably ignorant of the temptations that arise and of the consequences of yielding to them. But when a girl and a man are both well-informed on the subject, and the girl is neither mentally deficient nor of the kindred non-resistant type, it is only fair to regard both as equally responsible, in so far as experience, age, or position does not give one an unfair advantage over the other. It is often forgotten that this admission is inherent in any claim to an equal standard of morality for the sexes: and those who claim that women are responsible beings fit for self-government must admit that they exercise their responsibility in this matter also. Consciously or unconsciously women are indeed often the tempters, and when once within the zone of temptation it may be doubted whether women are the weaker sex. This fact is frankly recog-



nised among the women of the working-classes who have fewer temptations to regard themselves as irresponsible. Some interesting evidence on this point is given by Dr. James Devon, then Medical Officer of Glasgow Prison, in "The Criminal and the Community":—"The general opinion seems to be that men are continually seducing women, and I am not in a position to say whether it is true or not. Judging from books, it forms the subject of many stories, but I am here writing of that small portion of the world which has come under my own observation, and in my experience it is grotesquely untrue. I have heard the woman's statement in the great majority of cases of infanticide in Scotland during the last sixteen years, and I can recall few in which she made any complaint against the father of the child, although I sought for it. In some cases I was told that the father had not been informed of the woman's condition, although she knew where to find him; and that he had been kept in ignorance because she did not want to marry him. In the other cases the conception seemed to be the result of intimacy that was temporary and long past."

This is not to say that in innumerable instances women are not the victims of heartless fraud as well as natural temptation, as in cases of seduction under promise of marriage. Nature, by exonerating the man from all physical consequences of procreation, and his superior economic position, combine to make him the more able to stand by the mother of his child: if he chooses to use these sex-privileges to shirk the results of his pleasure no word of defence can be said for him. Particularly difficult for a woman to understand are the cases where an apparently decent and kindly married man seduces a girl under promise of marriage. Nevertheless it must be remembered that these are not the unvarying rule,

and that the facts of each individual case must be known before the blame is apportioned between man and woman.

### SEDUCTION AND PROSTITUTION

The seduced girl may be driven into prostitution by any or all of three influences. Firstly, there is the emotional shock consequent on seduction and desertion. It is recognised that there are moods and emotions which impel a man to take to drink, bad company and the shortest way to the devil. It is not so generally recognised that there are similar psychological disturbances which may impel a woman to a similar course ; in which the fact that even deeper and more irretrievable degradation is open to her may afford her a certain satisfaction, and a life of prostitution may offer an opportunity for revenge on society and a counter-irritant to her own mental pain. The seduced girl has to bear not only the anguish of having lost her lover, but she must, particularly if she be of a class where pre-marital unchastity in women is severely regarded, conceal her grief and its cause. Even if she remain undetected by her relatives, there is a strong impulse to break with her old life by leaving home and employment, and adventure unprotected on a new life. That this new life should be one of prostitution is rendered more likely by the fact that her sexual experience has probably aroused her physical desires. The numbness which follows an emotional catastrophe blunts the fastidiousness which would previously have made her find the life repulsive : and she may feel that now the man who satisfied her emotionally has left her, sexual intercourse is equally mechanical no matter with whom it takes place. And, of course, the disapproval of her class may kill her self-respect.

Secondly, her seduction may affect her economic position unfavourably. She may lose her situation

and her employer may refuse to give her a reference. Especially in domestic service a girl has much difficulty in regaining a good situation, and, without influential help, is forced to take rough and poorly paid jobs despite all the qualifications she may possess. And too often the loss of character means an expectation on the part of the employer that the penitent shall give her services at a reduced rate in consideration of her previous misdeed. Mr. Thomas Holmes, in "Pictures and Problems from London Police Courts," bears witness that this desire to get a penitent "on the cheap" is common among employers:—"Some kind people can, I believe, find a sort of gratification in making a profit or in getting cheap labour from people who are down. . . . A large number of good people are tarred with this brush, for I have received scores of letters at different times from persons who required either servants or assistants of some sort, and who were willing to take, with a view to their reformation, some girl or woman who had gone wrong, or some man who was down, the condition being that I should recommend them. 'What are the duties? What is the payment? What references can you give?' I have always inquired of them. I invariably found that the duties were numerous and heavy, and the pay about half the current rate. The question of references was often taken as a gratuitous insult on my part. . . . I have sent back to their homes, in various parts of England, women, healthy, strong, and useful, who have been sent up to London to be 'rescued,' and after being 'rescued' have been sent out to drudgery at half a crown or three shillings per week, with certain deductions. Needless to say, they found their way into our police courts." If in consequence of these economic effects of seduction a girl's family, perhaps already disgusted by her conduct, finds her coming on their

hands a burden, they may make her life unbearable by harsh treatment.

Thirdly, the girl who has lost her character may be exposed to temptation and persecution from unscrupulous persons. Notwithstanding the strongest desire to avoid any repetition of her lapse, her resistance may be worn down by repeated attack, and she may be forced into yet lower depths of degradation. "The woman," says the nurse in a workhouse infirmary, "has little chance in the place where she went wrong. All the men of a certain sort look upon her afterwards as their property. There was a woman here who had to make complaint against one of the men. Even her own brother-in-law had tried to have relations with her because she had once fallen." This factor also varies according to the local public opinion regarding the pre-marital chastity of women.

The histories of girls driven into prostitution by seduction are monotonously similar. The following are a few stories illustrative of the factors discussed above.

I. F., the daughter of very respectable parents near Epping Forest, and not naturally a bad girl, was employed in a factory. At sixteen she was ruined by a young man, and rapidly went from bad to worse. She left home and went about with bad companions. She has been in the Lock Hospital and knows the West End of London.

Q. O., a shop assistant in a large drapery establishment in a seaport town, was seduced when twenty-six by a married man. Thereafter she took to drink, made bad companions, and became a prostitute.

O. V., who lives near London with a mother who drinks, works in a factory where the moral tone is very bad. At eighteen she was ruined and attempted suicide. She is now, at nineteen, on the borders of prostitution, and has become very hardened.

O. H. was brought up in a good home by good parents. She had rather a restless, roving disposition, and was never fond of consecutive work, but she had good situations as general or cook-general. When twenty-two she was led astray by a young man of whom she was fond, with the result that she had to go into the Lock Hospital. On leaving she was given a chance of work, but she had lost the sight of one eye through syphilis, and was altogether so unstrung that she refused it and went on the streets, living in a common lodging-house. She has since gone out to Canada, and is now doing well.

I. H., after the death of her parents, lived with an aunt and was in domestic service. At nineteen she was seduced by her sweetheart. At twenty her aunt turned her out, and she got into the company of bad girls and went on the streets.

E. Q., an intelligent girl, was in service in a small situation at Reading, earning £12 a year. At seventeen she yielded to temptation by her lover through ignorance. At nineteen every door was shut against her and so she became a prostitute.

N. E., a young girl from a respectable home, went into service as "between girl" in a family who had a large house in Mayfair and one in the country. She was leaving her situation, when she was sixteen, and as her successor was arriving a week before her time was up, she was sent from the country to stay with the two housemaids who had charge of the Mayfair house while the family were out of town. One day these two women sent N. to speak to the corporal at the gate of X. barracks and to say that if he had two soldiers who had no young women, there were two young women in a house in Mayfair who would be pleased to have them to tea. N. waited at the gate of the barracks and conducted the



two soldiers back with her. By the end of the week she was living in a room kept by one of these soldiers.

### ILLEGITIMATE MOTHERHOOD

All the factors associated with seduction and desertion are enormously emphasised when seduction results in a child. The emotional shock is greatly intensified, the economic burden is doubled, and unscrupulous persons have a more helpless victim to persecute. It is true that the law helps the unmarried mother to claim money for her child's support from the father through the affiliation order : but this is a very imperfect instrument. Only one unmarried mother in four applies for an affiliation order, and, though many of the women who do not do so are doubtless helped by voluntary contributions from the fathers of their children, it is probable that many are deterred by the conditions under which application has to be made. The woman has to come into open court in the district in which she resides, and publicly disclose the whole story of her disgrace. This is an ordeal which many young and unhardened unmarried mothers cannot bring themselves to face. And if she succeeds in getting the affiliation order she may still be required to collect the payment herself. This not only prevents the woman from going away to a place where she is not known and making a fresh start, but it often tends to keep up the undesirable connection. A striking example of this was given us by a medical witness. K. G. was a girl on the borderland of mental deficiency who had been a general servant in a hard situation. She was seduced by her master and had a baby. She got an affiliation order against the man, and went home to live with her mother. For a year or so she lived honestly, helping to support mother, child, and herself by lace-work, but found it a terrible struggle. The

man stopped payment, so after a month she went over to his home to see him. She came back with no money, but admitted to her mother that she had done wrong with him again. As a consequence she gave birth to a diseased baby, and herself had specific disease. Moreover, the maximum which the justices can order the father to pay is five shillings a week until the child attains its sixteenth year. This is obviously quite an inadequate sum for the support of a child.

When it is grasped that this, the only legal resource of the unmarried mother, is only a broken reed, it will seem no over-statement to say that she is the most pitiable figure in the modern social system. But there is a tendency to exaggerate the frequency with which women are driven to prostitution for the sake of keeping the baby. That some are so driven cannot be doubted. It is, however, also common for the mother to submit to the irksomeness of residence in a Rescue Home, and service in a poor situation for the sake of her child, and afterwards to break loose and finally take to prostitution, not in order to support her child, but because it has died. Such a mother, could she keep her baby with her and care for it, and protect it from the illness and death which are always ready to seize the neglected infant, would in all probability be saved from her subsequent career. In the statistics of causes at the end of this volume, "having a child to support" is advanced in fifteen cases, and "death of a child" in six, but it is remarkable that in a very large proportion of the histories the woman has at some time lost her child. It would, therefore, not be surprising, were we able to ascertain the facts in greater detail, to find that in other cases the prostitution of the mother dated from the period of despair and loneliness following the loss of her baby. If the birth of an illegitimate child to the woman

without resources is a dangerous time, no less so is the time of this child's death, a fact now recognised by many rescue workers.

There is a theory, which is advanced by a few persons engaged in preventive or rescue work, that it is a sort of semi-conscious longing for maternity that urges girls to yield to seduction, and they tell us that the mother who has lost her child has a strong tendency to seek occasion to become a mother again. This is borne out by the evidence of the secretaries of various charitable societies, and many poor-law officials tell us, with numerous illustrative examples, that the widow who is relieved of the economic burden of her children by their admission into an institution very frequently loses any relief she may be receiving through becoming again a mother. The following instance was given us as a case where motherhood rather than immediate sexual satisfaction was the object of desire. O. B. is under the observation of a married couple who have long experience in social and rescue work. Her home surroundings appear to have been at least questionable. She had a child of whom she was passionately fond and it died. Since this she cannot be kept away from men, and must speak to every man who comes in her way: they would not be surprised any day to hear that she is "in trouble" again. She is a thoroughly nice girl and "very nice-minded."

But it must be noted that women react to the experience of motherhood in very different ways. Often the illegitimate mother shows no maternal instinct at all, and loathes the child as the cause of her disgrace. This aspect of illegitimate motherhood has a bearing on prostitution, for it may so darken the child's early life that, if it be a girl, it may drift into prostitution. It has been impressed upon us by witness after witness during

this enquiry that the prostitute is frequently an illegitimate child herself. The mother may abandon the child without scruple, and it will therefore have the disadvantage of an institutional upbringing. Even should she keep it there may come a time when, resentful of the memory of her own weakness, she visits this resentment in one way or another upon the innocent reminder of it. If she has married and borne children to her husband, her firstborn may be pushed aside for these, and in a thousand ways made to feel an intruder. And observers state that the illegitimate child has certain temperamental qualities, perhaps due to unfavourable pre-natal conditions, which make life more difficult for it than for the child of normal birth and upbringing. In the words of an experienced rescue worker, "The illegitimate child has no place in the world, it is therefore a difficult child; it is not in its normal environment, it dreams dreams, is dissatisfied, always vaguely seeking for something. This has been my experience again and again. The children very seldom know they are illegitimate themselves, but I have suspected it in case after case, and I have never been wrong yet."

The following are a few instances where it has been definitely stated that prostitution was taken up as a consequence of illegitimate motherhood: in most cases, either in order to support a child or as a result of the death of a child.

M. A. worked in a factory near London, where many rough girls were employed. She earned 7s. weekly, or from 5s. to 9s. at piece work. When about twenty-three she first became loose living owing to the low moral conditions around her. At twenty-seven she had a child. Her factory earnings were insufficient to support both of them, so she became a prostitute. She is now thirty-five, and is constantly met out at night.

S. E. was sent to a Church Army Home when she left school, as her mother was afraid she might go wrong: Thence she went to service. At nineteen she walked out with a young man, and at twenty had a child by him. She says she went on the streets to help support her child. She got sick of the life and went into the workhouse with her child, who got ill there, was taken from her, and died. She then went back to the streets.

O. R. is a rather intelligent German woman. She came to England as ladies' hairdresser when twenty-two. When about twenty-four she went out to South Africa with friends. Here, when twenty-five, she was seduced and had a child, who died when about nine months old. She then returned to England, and took up prostitution. She is now about thirty, and lives in a flat in Bloomsbury. Her interviewer fancies that she is lazy, and that therefore the life had attractions for her. She appeared to be a slow thinker, honest, straightforward, abstemious, and careful.

A. M. became a mother at about seventeen by the man she expected to marry, and her mother turned her out of the house. She first boarded out her baby, then deserted it, and it was sent to the workhouse. She became a prostitute, but did not like it, and was very unsuccessful.

T. I. was the daughter of a man receiving a good income from the life-interest in some property, who died when she was still very young. Her mother also had a small private income. T. is a sharp, alert, intelligent girl, self-reliant, honest, and frank, passionate and impulsive. She was very strictly brought up. At eighteen she was engaged to be married, and was seduced by her *fiancé* after the banns were put up. He disappeared before the day fixed for the wedding. She had a child, and after her confinement was forced to



leave home. She had some money of her own and set up a home for herself, being "kept," but also receiving other men when her protector was out of the way. She frequents public-houses, but was still quite sober when met with after passing three hours in one. Her child of fifteen months lives with her. She is filled with deep resentment against her betrayer, and if ever she comes across him intends to have her revenge. She doesn't care if she "swings for him."

D. O.'s parents ran a seaside hotel and sent her to a good school. She was quite happy at home, but her father died when she was fifteen, and her mother married again; this caused estrangement between mother and daughter. A premium of £50 was paid to place her as probationer in a hospital, and at eighteen she was seduced by a medical student. She says she had at that time no idea how children came into the world. She had a child and after that became a general servant and then a waitress, but was always afraid she would meet some of the girls employed by her father. She has never depended altogether on prostitution, but has been forced to resort to it by want of money since leaving the hospital. She is a fairly intelligent girl, not at all inclined to be serious and not at all dull, but rather ignorant, shy, and weak, though honest. She is passionately fond of her child, who is now four years old. Our informant, who has known D. for two or three years, thinks that if she could get employment which would support her and her child in a respectable way, she would leave the life and not return to it, yet at the same time she says she would not remain strictly moral, for the simple reason that she likes sexual intercourse. She had just been applying for a situation in a tobacconist's shop.

E. W., an intelligent girl in domestic service, yielded to

a man who promised to marry her when she was twenty. She lost her situation through having a child and the man left her, so she became a prostitute. Her child is living.

T. E. was born in Dublin. Her parents came to London when she was eight. Her father, a publican, died when she was sixteen, and her mother married again. She was educated at a convent in Ireland, but otherwise her upbringing was probably not very strict. She is a well-educated and very intelligent girl and, unlike most prostitutes, talks grammatically and well. She is strong and sensible, honest and candid ; vivacious, hot-tempered, energetic and can be trusted to look after herself. She had a post as companion to a lady, but had a child when a little over eighteen and so lost her job. She was installed in a flat by a man with money whose acquaintance she had made while a companion, and she lived as some man's mistress for a time till he went abroad. Ever since she has been " on the game " intermittently. She managed a hotel for a while and says she could always make a living in a straight way if she wanted to. She has two male friends who look after her. She says it is her own fault that she descended to this life, and exonerates the father of her child completely ; he has, she says, always been exceptionally good to her and would have married her but for some social bar. He still contributes to the support of herself and her child. She is a determined woman, much superior, says our informant, to the ordinary prostitute, and full of plans for herself and her child, who is now with her, but is soon to go to a convent school abroad. She looks forward to the time three or four years hence, when she can open a tea-shop or some such business, and have her daughter, of whom she is very proud, with her. She hopes to keep her at home and at the same time to

keep her respectable. T. E. drinks and was twice drunk, she says, in Coronation week, but is fully alive to the usual end of women of her class and determined to avoid it.

C. U. was a very fine German woman in service in Fulham. At twenty "she got into trouble" and after her confinement in the infirmary she could not get a character for service and for four years was on the streets, supporting her child.

N. I. was an intelligent but delicate girl living at home and going to daily domestic service. When seventeen she was seduced by the choirmaster and had a child. There was trouble at home owing to the disgrace, and she took up with bad company and so when eighteen she became a prostitute.

## CHAPTER VI

### COMPULSION AND EXPLOITATION

Prostitution, like many other industries, is largely in the hands of middlemen, merchants, dealers, petty traffickers and independent women who work on their own account, much as in any other great home and international trade. Some of the persons who seek to make a living or a fortune by purveying women appear to restrict themselves rather to acting as attendants, advisers, instructors, protectors, or go-betweens; but some employ force, fraud, and any possible means of obtaining influence over their victims, in order to procure girls and women who had no previous intention of becoming prostitutes, and indeed the strongest possible objection to such a course. It is extremely difficult to judge whether the latter type predominates over the former or how far the traffic is really organised. It has been alleged that incitement by the middleman is one of the chief factors that make women enter upon a life of prostitution, and there is a type of reformer who aims at settling the problem by punitive legislation directed against the procurer and procuress, as in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1912. The following histories of girls whose introduction to prostitution was due to the influence and design of some other person may throw a light on what part is really played by the element of compulsion.

## EXPLOITATION BY RELATIVES

We have already seen how bad homes breed moral obliquity, and in themselves predispose a young girl to easy submission to a life of prostitution. In an overcrowded house modesty and fastidiousness are practically unattainable; and in a district of overcrowded houses the children, even if they are not actually tampered with and corrupted, become familiar with prostitution as they play in the streets. When the direct and purposeful exploitation of girls by their parents and relatives is added to the influence of such an environment, it is only natural that for the most part the girls have neither the courage nor the desire to oppose their wishes. To insist on leading a virtuous life would require not only rectitude but imagination. Moreover, the very fact that a girl has relatives who are willing to be procurers is often a sign that she comes of a corrupt stock naturally apt for prostitution. The influence of the hereditary factor is indicated by the fact, noticeable in many of the collected histories, that girls exploited by relatives are difficult to reclaim and tend to drift back repeatedly to their old way of life. The hopeless position of the feeble-minded under home compulsion, with their natural tendency to become prostitutes, will be dealt with in a later chapter.

N., D. and S. are the elder of five daughters of an unmarried mother in a large provincial town. This woman brought up her daughters to prostitution as a trade; she has been several times in prison, and her two younger girls have been rescued from her, it having been legally proved that she is an unfit person to have charge of them. N. is the worst of the girls. She had a baby, born in the workhouse, when she was seventeen. She posed for nude photographs until the police put a stop to this, raiding the house several times. D. had



a baby when fifteen. She is said to have been sold by her mother to a bad house for 2s. 6d. S., likewise a prostitute, is lame. Our informant knew the whole family for many years.

T. and R. are daughters of a thoroughly bad mother, who was herself living with a man and keeping a house of ill-fame. She turned her girls out when they were about eighteen because they would not do as she told them, and they went to the workhouse to avoid her, and gradually drifted down, becoming prostitutes on their own account apparently when about nineteen. One of them was received into a Rescue Home the following year.

C. is the daughter of a woman who is separated from her husband and is "living a bad life." C. was for three years in an institutional school, and three of her brothers and sisters were taken by the guardians of the East London parish where their mother lives. From their school C. was sent to service, but her mother took her away when she was sixteen, and sent her out on the streets, herself living on the proceeds. C. has been helped from time to time, but always insists on returning to her life on the streets.

V., of Glasgow, is the daughter of a drunken mother with a large family, who drove her on to the streets. V. does not like the life, though she may like the excitement surrounding it, but she sticks to it because it means a living. She has been reclaimed several times, but always runs away from her work and has eventually been lost sight of by the medical woman who gives this information.

B. is the child of a London mother. She was in service, but when she went home her mother took away her shoes, in order to force her to stop at home and earn money by prostitution. B., a pretty girl, was found

shuffling about the streets in old slippers, very miserable because she did not want to stay with her mother and become a prostitute.

G.'s father is in Canada, and she lived with her mother and grandmother near London. At seventeen she was a prostitute, owing, says our informant, to the force of bad example and sheer laziness. She was the same year taken into a home, with the promise of a good situation later, but she did not like work and ran back to her grandmother, her mother at this time being in prison for keeping a brothel. She told the other girls in the home that she meant to be a flower-girl, as that was an easy life. Two years later, at nineteen, she came from the police-court to a rescue worker, saying she wanted to give up her old life. She had specific disease and still could not bear work.

K. was brought up to a life of prostitution by her mother in South Shields. When quite young she took a house of her own in her mother's name. We have other instances of girls in their teens setting up brothels on their own account in Glasgow.

X. is an illegitimate child who was living with her mother at Liverpool. At fourteen she was allowed to be out at all times and went wrong through bad companions. After this she worked on a farm, then in a factory, and was for a short time a general servant. At seventeen she became a prostitute through a real liking for the life, and because she was too lazy to work for a living. In this course she was encouraged by her mother.

N. was a girl whose father forced her to go out on the streets. She sometimes brought him back £3 a night. In the end she became thoroughly diseased.

I. lived with her father at Southwark; her mother was dead. She worked for a short time in a factory and was then misled by a very bad woman, and went on

the streets in Hyde Park and Piccadilly. Her father was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for living on her immoral earnings.

The I.'s are four sisters, the children of a drunken father and without a mother, who have all become prostitutes owing to the influence of M. I., the eldest sister. S. worked on and off in factories and at daily work, and they hoped to rescue her, but M. seemed to have great influence over her and would not allow it. S. was keeping a man at twenty-one, and is since living with another "low man." J. was a good steady girl for a time, but is now as bad as her eldest sister. F. married but afterwards went on the streets.

#### EXPLOITATION BY HUSBAND OR LOVER

The husband or lover who sends his woman out to earn money on the streets is doubtless in many cases a man who deliberately plans to make his living out of her in this way when he marries or seduces her. The comparatively small number of such cases among our histories does not necessarily imply that they are not in reality common. It is obvious that the seasoned professional will watch so carefully over his woman that she will have few opportunities of betraying him.

On the other hand it would seem from our histories that a husband or lover often drifts into being a "bully" much as, from accounts discussed in another chapter, it would seem that women drift into prostitution. It is a refuge from uneasy circumstance. If we read the subjoined stories of A. B. and C. E. we find that their bullies may have started with the most honourable intentions towards them. They made no special efforts to secure the girls, who of their own free will turned to them for shelter at a time of stress. It may have been that their sweethearts came to these men at a time when

they perhaps were not seriously thinking of taking upon themselves the burden of domesticity, and that when the burden began to weigh too heavily this made them feel less scruple in turning its cause to profitable account. These stories must be balanced against such as that told by B. E., who may quite possibly have walked into a carefully-laid trap. It would be unfair not to recognise that the bully is as much a victim of economic pressure as the prostitute. Like her he may now and then be a clever and deliberate villain: but for the most part he is a social failure, foredoomed by physical, mental, or educational deficiencies. In many cases he seems too obviously a by-product and not a cause of the evil for it to be worth the Law's while to pursue him with special severity.

Moreover, the bully can plead in self-defence that his woman needs him for two purposes. Firstly, he supplies a psychic need. Observers have often noted the strong attachment displayed by prostitutes for their bullies. The constant change of partners who satisfy neither the woman's affections nor her need for companionship enhances her loneliness and intensifies instead of superseding the desire which every normal person feels for relationships of some permanence. The protector and still more the child of such a woman is worshipped with a passionate adoration. Despite the contempt in which the bully is held it is certain that he is the chief consolation and the only emotional interest of many a prostitute's life. It is true that too often he is the cause as well as the adjunct of the woman's downfall, and is given to brutality; at the same time the woman indicates that she needs him by her willingness to suffer for him and to return to him.

The bully is also an economic asset to the prostitute. She is sometimes visited by drunken and brutal clients

against whom she requires his physical protection. And often she has to deal with clients who know that they are engaged in a transaction with a person outside the law. The law which punishes the prostitute for soliciting and the procuress for brothel-keeping, but which does not punish the man who visits the prostitute or the brothel and will positively shield him by suppression of his name should his visit become the occasion of a woman's prosecution, reflects a social attitude which finds its extremest form in the practice of "bilking." The state of mind of the "bilking" client is described by Mr. W. H. Davies in the following passage:—"He knows very well that he has nothing to fear from the law and the only thing he has to put up with is the woman's tongue, which amuses the coward. And when her voice becomes too loud for his amusement, he takes to his heels." In such cases the bully collects the dues by threats and violence; the law provides the woman with no other way of getting her wages.

In considering the legislation which aims at the extermination of bully as bully, without reference as to whether he is or is not guilty of procuration, one must bear these facts in mind. It is claimed by those who advocate such legislation that its introduction is necessary to protect the prostitute from the brutal bully. But in theory the law already protects any woman from any brutal man. If prostitutes are unable to avail themselves of this protection it shows that the law is in practice forgetting justice, and discriminating between persons. We need a different and less contemptuous attitude on the part of the police, magistrates and the general public rather than fresh legislation.

The following are histories of women who were encouraged to be prostitutes by husbands and lovers. Again it may be noted that these, like the women who



are exploited by relatives, are not easy to reclaim and do not seem to dislike the life. This may be due to the fact that a woman often gets the husband she deserves : and that they both moved in social strata where prostitution was no extraordinary way of earning a living.

R. and M., two girls belonging to the higher class of artist's model, are going on the streets and keeping an artist with whom they both live. Affection for the man appears to be the motive of their prostitution, since their other profession would presumably bring in ample for their own needs, and prostitution is not common among the higher grade of artist's model, as distinct from the lower class of this profession.

A. C. was a barmaid at Windsor. She was enticed away by a foreigner who induced her to live with him. He dressed her up in fine clothes and sent her alone to the promenades of music halls and theatres to earn money. She ran away from him and went on the streets on her own account, drifting into prison when seventeen. Since then she has been in homes, Lock Hospital and on the streets.

A. J. married a bully at fourteen and came to a rescue home some years ago, aged twenty-three, having had a wretched life on the streets and having become a heavy drinker. She left again, saying that she had been accustomed for so long to a life of excitement that she could not now live without it.

E. B. had been a domestic servant and had worked in a factory. At twenty-two she married and her husband drove her on the streets to support him. A Rescue Society sent her back to her parents at their request when she was thirty-four.

A. B.'s mother reproached her when she was eighteen for being out of a situation, so A. left home and went to live with her sweetheart. He sent her out on the

streets to earn money and she earned so much that she left him and took lodgings for herself. When she was twenty-three she came to a Rescue Home, where they say she "doesn't seem so depraved as one would expect." She is now in domestic service.

B. E., the daughter of a farmer, was brought up in a good home and became an elementary school teacher. Against the wishes of her parents she became friendly when she was nineteen with a married man who tempted her. When twenty-one she was dismissed for unsatisfactory work and conduct ; she then went to live with this man, who ultimately sent her out on to the streets. She has since been in the Lock Hospital, and has now got a situation as mother's help.

C. E. was very miserable at home ; her mother drank and was unkind to her. She was working as a dress-maker at a small shop, hours 9 to 7.30 and wages about 9s. a week, and she did not like her work. When seventeen she left her mother's roof and went to live with undesirable people. She left these people and took a room with the man she had been keeping company with. After a time this man would not work, and she had to go out at night to help keep him. When she became too ill to do anything to bring money he left her. She died in the Infirmary two years later.

A. V. was a Dutch girl. She married a tailor who brought her over to England and as soon as he got her here introduced her to a "gentleman." After a time she said she would not lead this life of prostitution any more and separated from him. Afterwards she was heard to be living under the protection of another man to whom she was not constant.

Mrs. F. A. was left a widow at twenty-nine with three children. A sum of £200 was collected to buy a business for her. She made undesirable acquaintances, among

them a man whom she afterwards married, and who forced her at the age of thirty-one to become a prostitute to support him as well as herself. This went on for years and she underwent many convictions and terms of imprisonment. When she was about forty she denounced her husband's cruelty and he likewise underwent a term of imprisonment.

E. F., in the North of England, was driven out on to the streets by her husband, who refused to work. She supported him and her three children. Eighteen months later, when Mrs. F. was twenty-three, the case was reported and the man received three months' hard labour.

C. A. was servant in a farm-house, and at the age of twenty was persuaded by a man to leave her situation to marry him. They tramped the country together, and he took her to common lodging-houses and, as he afterwards admitted in court, induced her to go with other men. He left her, still unmarried, and she then lived with any one for a year. She had a child. She has since been reclaimed and is in service at a country rectory, where she is doing well, but "will be after men at nights, out like a cat after dark."

B. A. was a respectable married woman. Her husband became blind, and then forced her to go on the streets to support him. When she was ill in the Infirmary this blind man used to come up and storm at her because she could no longer bring him money.

E. C., a Jewish girl, was in domestic service, and at seventeen was ruined by her employer's son, who afterwards sent her to earn her living on the streets. She is now twenty-eight and has a child of eight of whom she is fond, but she refuses the offer of help to leave her present life.

## THE PROFESSIONAL PROCURESS

The professional procurer is as well-known a figure in the trade as the bully. We have seen in the previous chapter how the young prostitute often acts as a recruiting sergeant and leads other women to follow her example. But the procuress is not always young or attractive or herself a prostitute. Under all sorts of pretexts do such women gain influence over a young girl, taking advantage of her love of society and gaiety, her desire to be married, her loneliness and friendliness, her vanity, and any accident or attribute, good or evil, that she may have, so that they may introduce her into a house of ill-fame.

It is alleged by a certain school of writers on this problem that force or fraud are used to procure girls who had no previous intention of becoming prostitutes and that some of these victims are shipped abroad while others are kept prisoners in brothels in this country, where ghastly horrors are sometimes perpetrated. It is stated that the procurer descends on the innocent at the registry office, the railway terminus, and even the Bible class, ready to snatch them to an unknown fate by means of drugs, hypnotic influence, false messages, and such like methods of deception. But, without wishing to minimise the important part played by professional agents in leading girls to adopt this life, it must be pointed out that the existence of actual abduction as a means of procurement in this country is by no means proved. On the face of it the difficulties of abduction in civilised conditions make it unlikely to be a common crime, and there are obvious reasons why it would not pay the procurer. A weeping and reluctant girl is not an easily marketable asset, and it may be doubted whether the majority of men who visit houses of ill-fame are prepared to commit rape. And the procurer might well

fear that such a girl, particularly if she was educated and articulate, would sooner or later enlist the sympathies of a client and get him to rescue her by means of the police.

A crop of sensational stories of procurers which were spread at the time of the promotion of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1912 were investigated by Mrs. Teresa Billington Greig with results that were published in the "*English Review*" of June, 1913, under the title of "The Truth about the White Slave Traffic." She found that none of these stories could be substantiated, and that such authorities as Mr. Coote, of the National Vigilance Association, and Mrs. Hunter, of the National Vigilance Association of Scotland, had never come across any such case. Assistant Commissioner F. S. Bullock, the Central Authority in England for the Repression of the White Slave Traffic, to whom Mr. Arthur Lee, M.P., referred Mrs. Billington Greig as likely to authenticate the very positive statements about abduction he made when introducing the Act, says:—"I cannot call to mind a single case of the forcible trapping of a girl or a woman by drugs, false messages, or physical force during the last ten years, that has been authenticated or proved. I should say that such cases were very rare indeed. . . . The average number of cases of procuration in London is about three per annum, and none of these are really cases of trapping." Mrs. Billington Greig also found from a study of figures supplied by the Chief Constables of seven great towns that there was only one case of abduction by a procurer: that the majority of missing girls and women are traced: that in most places "the number of men and boys missing and untraced exceeds the number of girls and women, and the percentage of traced females is equal to or greater than the percentage of traced males. One may fairly deduce that



there is no abnormal cause of disappearance acting in the case of girls and women." The Chief Constables of all the towns unite in saying that they know of no organised trapping.

But this does not mean that there are not undoubtedly many cases of girls lured away to brothels on the Continent and in South America by false advertisements, or as members of variety troupes. For the case is very different in countries where State Regulation of Vice is in force, which empowers the police to take back to the *maison de tolérance* any girl who escapes from it, or where a corrupt police force has a financial interest in disorderly houses, as in America.<sup>1</sup> Under such conditions it may be worth the procurer's while to take the risks of abduction. That it is so is indicated by the high degree to which procuration is organised on the Continent, as is shown by the following authenticated story.

A young nurse, not used to travelling alone on the Continent, had been staying in a pension in a small German town, and wished to return through H——. She did not wish to go to a hotel that she knew nothing about, so the proprietor of the pension advised her to write to a Home for Governesses where she herself had stayed some years before. She did so, asking for accommodation for one night, and mentioning the hour at which she would arrive. After several days she received a postcard saying that the Home had been moved to a new address, and that they would be pleased to welcome her. On arriving at H—— she went to the address which was given her, and found that it was a furniture shop in a low district, and was closed for the

<sup>1</sup> The procurer has practically no chance to ply his trade unless there are houses of prostitution from which he can accept orders and to which he can dispose of his "goods." Kneeland, "Commercialised Prostitution in New York," p. 85.

night. She looked about and could see no house near by that looked like a boarding-house, so she consulted a policeman, and showed him the postcard. He was puzzled and assured her that there was no such place thereabouts. While she was talking to him a man who had been hanging about and listening to their conversation intervened, and said that he knew the Home in question well and that he would take her to it. She went off with him and he led her down a quiet side-street. Presently, thinking over the man's disreputable appearance and curious intervention, she resolved that she would not go on with him till she had consulted another policeman whom she saw coming. Her escort seemed much annoyed and assured her that the Home was just a few doors off, but quickly made off as she approached the policeman. This second policeman took in the position at once, and told her that she had come into a disreputable neighbourhood, and that there was no such place as she was looking for anywhere in H——. He directed her to a respectable pension in another part of the town, and she learned from her landlady that the Governesses' Home had been given up for good two years before.

Occurrences such as these can only be prevented by development of public opinion and greater police activity on the spot. The false advertisement and variety contract might be cheated of their victims by more vigilance on the part of the British Consulate and by increased knowledge among girls, who ought to understand that the fullest enquiries should be made before going to situations abroad.

But as to the extent and manner of procuration in this country we may take as significant the words of Mrs. Eleanor Carey, for sixteen years Police Court Missioner and Probation Officer at Thames Police Court.

“ In every case known to me of a girl being dragged down to life in a brothel she has been a willing though blind and misguided victim.” And the part the procurer more commonly plays may be judged from the fact that many of the prostitutes who have in their histories alleged that the procurer was the cause of their downfall, had been mistresses before or had come from bad homes. The victims of the procurer do not need to be drugged : they have been made helpless enough by poverty and misfortune and apply to him as they might to the foreman of a relief works. That the procurer is less the orchard thief than the blow-fly settling on fallen fruit makes him no more desirable a member of society, and he must indeed be severely dealt with. Yet it is plainly absurd to hope that prostitution would be checked by his extermination. Were every procurer flogged to death the vast majority of their victims would still fall, perhaps a little more clumsily for lack of their intermediary offices, into prostitution.

The following are some histories bearing on the subject.

E. G. is a German. She was in service in her own country, and, seeing an advertisement of a situation in Bloomsbury, came over many years ago to find herself in a house of ill-fame. She eventually got away and set up as a prostitute on her own account, refusing to have a partner, so that the place she lived at was not legally a brothel. She is now about thirty-seven and is thriving in her profession. She means to go on for some time in order to save more money, and has already saved £300 with which she intends to set up a hotel or business in some country where she is not known. She is a phlegmatic woman and really in no hurry to leave the life, though she says “ it is not very nice to have a different man every day.” Her best regular client is a

married doctor, to whom she once went for advice, and she is visited regularly by two or three officers from the barracks. In all these years she has only come across one man who "gave her any trouble." When she was already getting on in years she became engaged to a young man of twenty-one who died a month before they were to have been married. She is very sentimental about him and says she could never love another man.

Q. is the child of a man now undergoing a long term of imprisonment and an immoral mother. She answered an advertisement in the local paper and went to a bad house frequented by soldiers.

H. E. went to service at the age of fifteen in a boarding-house for Indian students. The mistress made the girl sleep in the kitchen, which was a passage-room between the two houses, and would not allow her to lock the door. She also left H. alone in the house with the students when she herself went for a summer holiday. This woman was not moral herself, and it is evident, says our informant, that she wished H. to go wrong with the boarders, a wish with which H. complied because she wanted the money. At the age of seventeen H. has a baby and has been through a Rescue Home, but her mind is so contaminated that she is not satisfactory since her new start in life.

G. A., a well-brought up girl and a good housemaid, was taken by a circus man to a house of ill-fame when she was fifteen. She remained there until she was just over sixteen and expecting her confinement, when they turned her out.

A. H. is a clever, bright girl and a good servant. When hotel chambermaid at the age of twenty-one she first went wrong with a well-to-do man who paid her half a sovereign. After this she was inveigled into a house of ill-fame and found it almost impossible to get

away until expecting her confinement, when she was turned out penniless. This house was frequented by well-to-do professional men. The owner was prosecuted and fined.

G. E., a fine looking, dark, handsome girl, was a machinist at Leeds, working for pocket money under good conditions of employment. When seventeen she was decoyed to York by an ex-soldier who was "wanted" for fraud. He brought her for his mates. The police noticed her as a new-comer, and took her to a Refuge, and her father gladly received her home again.

E. H. belonged to a respectable family and was a dressmaker and milliner. At the age of 21 she was induced to go to France with a man who promised to marry her, and with great difficulty broke away from the house of ill-fame in which she found herself. She was not, however, virtuous before going to France, and on returning to London went on the streets for a time.

W. H. was in good places in the country. When twenty-three she went as a housekeeper to a horse-dealer and coal-merchant and became his mistress. When she was thirty this man died and the home was sold up. She came to London, and on leaving the station stood in the streets wondering where she should go. An older woman spoke to her and invited her to come home with her. She found herself in a brothel in Holborn.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE MARRIED AND THE WIDOWED

It is difficult to find out whether or no any large number of previously respectable married women are driven by economic pressure to prostitution when their husbands are ill or out of work, or when they are deserted or widowed. Some witnesses, in especial many Poor Law Authorities, assure us that such cases are almost unknown. Others, for example a medical woman acquainted with some of the manufacturing districts in the North of England, and a Poor Law officer in a part of London which is a centre for prostitution of many grades and kinds, and another in a poor part of South London, tell us that the intermittent prostitution of married women is not at all uncommon. Nurses who have worked in seaport towns have given it as their experience that the wives of sailors often resort to prostitution as a temporary help when their husbands are away on voyages. This is probably connected with the high figures that have been published regarding the prevalence of venereal disease among married women in certain seaports.

The question has not been investigated with any thoroughness, nor is it ever likely to be, on account of the ease with which the married prostitute can conceal her occupation. But pending further information one is led to conclude that a number, not large but also not negligible, of perfectly decent women to whom the life is in no wise attractive, are driven on the streets for the

sake of husband, or children, or as the only means of maintaining themselves: that married women who have formerly been prostitutes, or who live in a district where the constant presence of the traffic hardens them to the idea of prostitution as a livelihood, or who are deprived for long periods of their husband's company, may easily resort to prostitution as a temporary or permanent expedient: and that the divorced, separated, or deserted wife and the widow are commonly in a disadvantageous economic position which may lead to temptation.

The forces which make women in such positions become prostitutes are obvious enough. Marriage, with subsequent widowhood, desertion, or breakdown of the husband leaves the woman in a worse economic position than before marriage. Not only is she probably burdened with dependants, but she has in many cases lost her place in the industrial world, and has a poor chance of regaining it. It is the opinion of Mrs. Bramwell Booth that so far as economic necessity is a direct cause of prostitution it is so mainly among widows and deserted wives with young children to support who are unwilling to break up their homes. In the case of such women we note a factor that operates also among unmarried mothers. When a woman loses her child or is relieved of the responsibility of bringing up her child, whether it be by friends or by an institution, she is peculiarly liable to become a prostitute. The death of a child inflicts on her the emotional shock which, as we see in our chapter on "Seduction and Desertion," is one of the most powerful of procurers. And whatever be the circumstances the separation from the child frees the mother from the necessity for self-restraint: she has nobody to whom she must set an example, and no respectable home to reward her for her respectability.

## ECONOMIC PRESSURE

The following are instances where the motive is clearly economic and the necessity urgent.

Mrs. I. S. was found on the streets. Her husband was out of work, and they were in debt for the rent, and on the borders of starvation. So she became desperate and went on the streets to earn money for her husband and new-born baby. She was given temporary assistance and her husband was helped, and the poor young woman has been overjoyed to give up her career—which was only a short one—on the streets.

A man was dying of consumption ; he and his wife were a devoted couple. The young woman went to work during the day, and supplemented her earnings by going out on the streets at night, and thus managed to get enough to keep her husband alive.

Mrs. I. Q. was not strikingly intelligent nor yet feeble-minded. She was married and had a child of seven years old when her husband fell out of work. They were all in the workhouse for some months. She then got tired of staying in the workhouse and went out, leaving her husband and child there. She stayed at a lodging-house and became a prostitute. After a time the husband came out of the workhouse also, and stayed at another lodging-house. The child was ill and was left in the workhouse. Mrs. Q. died the next year, aged twenty-seven.

D. M. was a respectable and intelligent married woman. Her husband deserted her soon after the birth of her first child, and she lived with her grandmother, and supported herself and her child by daily work. When twenty-one she was unable to get work, and so she went on the streets to earn money. She subsequently had two more children.

U. V., who came from Buckinghamshire, was a waitress

and married when about twenty-four. Two years later she left her husband owing to his cruelty and bad temper, and when she could not earn money by other means she went on the streets in Wandsworth and Marylebone. She was twice charged for intemperance, and after passing through a home she went into domestic service at the age of twenty-nine.

Mrs. I. C. said she had been left by her husband and forced to go on Piccadilly for a livelihood. She applied to a rescue worker when thirty-one, and was placed in domestic service. Ultimately she made a very happy marriage.

Mrs. Q. E. is a widow of twenty-six. She was living in a furnished room, and told the Relieving Officer that she had been simply driven on to the streets through destitution. She was unwilling to come into the workhouse, but when there she would not go out again, because, she said, she knew she would have to go on the streets if she did. A lady guardian of long experience interviewed her, and says that she looked like a woman who really had had a hard struggle, and that her story was probably quite true. She was finally persuaded to go out and try to make a fresh start. An arrangement was made for her to acquire the furniture of her room by easy instalments and she was told to come back again if she found it hard to live an honest life.

#### OTHER FACTORS

In the following cases passion, loneliness, and other motives seem to have led to the first false step or to have united with economic necessity in urging towards prostitution. Plainly, friendlessness and disharmony at home are as dangerous to the married woman as to the young girl. And the married woman has the added disadvantages of having stronger and more articulate

sexual needs and of being, owing to her maturer age, more susceptible to the temptation of drink. The position of the divorced woman is specially desperate. She has all these dangers to contend with and the additional misfortune of being under a social ban.

Mrs. A. O., a clever, pretty, well-spoken young woman, was a soldier's wife. She went wrong at twenty-two, partly through loneliness, in her husband's absence. At twenty-three she was living the life of a prostitute while he was in India.

Mrs. O. T. was brought up in a bad home in Edinburgh. Her parents were working-class people and drank. She did casual charing and lived a respectable life before her marriage. When she was about twenty-five her husband ceased to maintain her or the children. She could not make enough at charing so she went on the streets rather than see her children want. This was not a case of self-sacrifice, however, as she had no scruples about taking up prostitution and now appears to like it. Her husband lives with her (in London), but does not interfere with her so long as he is not asked to contribute to the support of his wife and two children ; in fact, he is partially supported by her. She is taking heavily to drink.

Mrs. J. A. came from the "best of homes." Her parents were evidently in a good position, and she was educated at a boarding-school in the North of England, but she is very reticent on the subject of her early life. She married a merchant in a big way of business in the North. After a time she was unfaithful and her husband divorced her. Her lover is a poor man who had to leave the country after the case, and is now doing badly ; otherwise, she thinks, he would send for her. When about twenty-eight she became a prostitute as she was incapable of making a living in any other way. When met with in a restaurant she had been living with



a man for some time but had quarrelled with him and had not seen him for three weeks ; so she had been forced to come out to raise some money. She was trying to raise enough to go North and visit a friend, who, she thought, would assist her in starting a flat of her own. Mrs. J. A. is an exceedingly intelligent woman and speaks well, though she uses the slang of her kind. She is soured by her experience and drinks a good deal.

Mrs. C. O. says that she was a hospital nurse, and that she married, was divorced for unfaithfulness, married the co-respondent, and was deserted by him. After a career of prostitution she came to a Home, at the age of twenty-five. She subsequently went to a situation as servant, but she drank heavily and was dishonest. She left her situation and went back to Piccadilly. She is really an inebriate.

Mrs. U. S. was a cook getting fairly good wages, first in officers' households, and then in Scarborough in large boarding-houses. She married a butcher, was unfaithful to her husband, and was separated. He had not money enough to get a divorce. At forty she became a prostitute and received twelve convictions for indecent behaviour, drunkenness, and soliciting during the succeeding five years. She was then received into a Home, and after a long sojourn there has since done well in domestic service.

Mrs. W. E. was an intelligent woman with nice relatives. She was left a widow with two children, and her brother took charge of both. She then went to live with a man. The reason why she did so is not certainly known, but she is said to dislike work. After six years he deserted her and she became a prostitute. When deserted she had no home, but it is believed that her relatives would have helped her and that " real love of the life led her wrong." She was fond of drink.

Mrs. O. X. worked before marriage in the refreshment department of a big furnishing establishment. She gave up her work on marriage and at twenty-eight was left a widow with a boy of three years. This boy was taken into an orphanage, and she had "a friend who was good to her"; in other words she went to live with a man. She says that when she was thirty-nine this man suddenly died, and she had to go on the streets for a living, but there is reason to believe that she has been a prostitute longer than she admits. She says that she has "two or three friends," and does not walk so much on the streets. Though living in a street mainly inhabited by persons of her class, she leads a very solitary life and makes friends with no one. She would not, she says, like to be dependent on a man again but would sooner be on her own. Her room is clean and neat, but she is suspected of drinking. She professes to be very much ashamed, saying that "it is not the sort of life to live," though some are brought up to it, and do not mind. She appears to be a thoroughly intelligent, capable woman, and talks of trying to get work.

Mrs. W. A. belonged to a respectable middle-class family. She married a doctor and was left a widow. After having a lot of trouble she got into low spirits and took to drink. From this she drifted into prostitution. She is a woman between forty and forty-five years of age, and lives in a women's common lodging-house in one of the lowest districts of London, possibly with the idea of hiding herself. She goes out at night and drinks heavily. She looked nicely dressed, in quiet clothes worn as a lady would wear them, and her hair was well done. But for being rather drunk she would have appeared to be quite a respectable middle-class woman.

Mrs. H., an intelligent girl, was a housemaid. She

had a child when nineteen and married when twenty. Her husband died when she was twenty-two, and she says that she then took to drink, got in with bad companions, and became a prostitute.

Mrs. T. is the daughter of respectable parents, and she has been a dressmaker on her own account for fourteen years. She is married, but when she was thirty-one her husband went off with a barmaid. After he left her she lived with another man for about six months and then drifted on the streets. She has been twice charged for intemperance and once for attempting suicide. She entered a Home when thirty-three. Her husband then expressed himself willing to make a home for her again and at her desire he took her away.

Mrs. G. O. was an intelligent woman. When she was thirty-two her husband and two children all died suddenly within two months. She took to drink to drown her sorrow and became a prostitute.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROBLEM OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED

THE great interest taken by the public during the last few years in the question of the feeble-minded has thrown a great deal of light on the part that mental deficiency plays in the making of prostitutes. As a result of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded and the ensuing discussion we now know much more about this factor than we do about any other. And even if there were not this enormous mass of evidence it would be plain from many *a priori* reasons that feeble-minded girls would be specially drawn to this profession.

There are two types of feeble-minded girls who are almost inevitably destined to prostitution. There is firstly the large proportion whose sexual inclinations are abnormally strong or whose power of self-control over natural impulses is abnormally weak. This type has been described by Dr. James Kerr in his Report to the Education Committee of the London County Council in 1908: "Very commonly, through such individuals being on what might be considered as a lower streak of mental development than normal, the emotions are much more developed relatively than the intellectual qualities which give restraint, so that they are exceedingly plausible in speech, and have a peculiarly attractive gift of adapting themselves, smiles or tears being available with equal ease according to their environment." Such women cannot be restrained from the pursuit of men,

and lack that fastidiousness and sense of personality which make prostitution specially abhorrent to the normally intelligent woman with strong passions: so they find the life temporarily or permanently attractive.

Secondly, there is the large class who are non-resistant. They have no active impulse to seek out men, but they will yield to any one who approaches them. In the evidence before the Royal Commission case after case is characterised in such terms as "no immoral tendencies but an easy prey to anyone." This peculiar facility of disposition, which makes them liable to fall, and if rescued to relapse, is illustrated by an incident which recently occurred in a Rescue Home. It contained thirty inmates, who were all free to take their discharge at any moment, but who were perfectly contented with their work and treatment. A new girl came; after a few days she grew discontented and harangued the other girls. At once they all agreed to leave in a body. One of the sisters then talked to each insurgent separately, and after a few words every one of them entirely agreed with her, and was as determined to stay in the home as she had been half an hour before to leave it. The insurrection was dead. The forces that often compel girls of normal intelligence to become prostitutes, such as exploitation by relatives, operate irresistibly on the feeble-minded. The libertine employer, the man who comes courting without intentions of marriage, the professional procurer, the bad companion, has half his work done for him by nature. The high occupational risk of domestic service, which will be discussed in a later chapter, makes it questionable whether this is an occupation which should be selected for mentally deficient girls. There is no need to labour this point by recording the many sordid histories of which we have details. It is worth noting that of ten girls who definitely state that



they were seduced under promise of marriage seven were feeble-minded.

There are three important factors that drive the feeble-minded into prostitution by excluding them from other occupations. Firstly, they often lose their characters at a very early age. A marked characteristic of the feeble-minded is the precocity of their sexual impulses. Everyone who has had experience of the education of these unfortunate children will recall instances of pretty, innocent-looking little girls who were thoroughly familiar with sexual experience and the arts of seduction. Dr. James Kerr, in the Report previously mentioned, writes concerning the mentally defective: "Interference with the opposite sex shows itself in boys, but most objectionably in girls. There is every grade, from the natural attraction of the sexes to the most flagrant and offensive behaviour requiring the attention of the police." Many such cases are to be found among our histories. For instance, A. L., described as ignorant and mentally and morally below the average, confesses that at 15 she allowed boys to take liberties with her and had a boy sweetheart whom she probably seduced. She has been immoral ever since and has a natural taste for wrong-doing. E. M., a feeble-minded girl who went on the streets after giving birth to a baby of Indian paternity, had given a lot of trouble while still at an elementary school by continually running after boys. Another such girl is described as associating with bad men at the age of thirteen. When a girl has lapsed it is obviously more difficult for her to get a situation, and thus many of the feeble-minded are never able to get a foothold in any respectable occupation.

Secondly, it is easy enough for a feeble-minded girl to get and keep light, unskilled and irresponsible work at girl's wages, but not so easy for her to pass like the

girl of normal intelligence from girl's to woman's work at the the age of seventeen or eighteen, for she is rarely worth woman's wages. Therefore she finds herself bored by monotonous work and discontented with low pay just at the time that she is particularly attractive to men and her sexual impulses are at their strongest. Very naturally the feeble-minded girl, with her incapacity to perceive consequences, turns from her unsatisfying employment to the new life of excitement and easy gain that offers itself.

Thirdly, if feeble-minded girls do succeed in getting respectable situations they are very likely to lose them because of their lack of intelligence and general inefficiency. And even should they perform their duties in a satisfactory manner they have a curious distaste for staying for any time in one place and tend to drift from situation to situation. Sooner or later there comes a time when employers will no longer engage girls with such records, so that they have to abandon their occupation and turn to prostitution.

It is obvious that the mental deficiency which makes such women prostitutes also makes them unsuccessful prostitutes. They are as unfitted for this as for any other profession ; more so, indeed, since the successful prostitute needs above all things the attributes of coldness and temperance. Their lack of inhibitory powers makes them liable to try to withstand the nervous exhaustion induced by their life by taking to drink. It is said that from fifty to sixty per cent. of the women in inebriate homes are feeble-minded and that the vast majority of these have at one time been prostitutes. And feeble-minded women are too witless and too lacking in the sense of self-preservation to take precautions against disease. This inability to look after themselves makes them quick to show the results of their life. Again

and again in our histories come such phrases as "she then became so depraved-looking that no one would employ her," and references to the degraded and uncleanly personal habits of such women.

Another characteristic of the feeble-minded which makes them poor prostitutes is their notorious fertility. At the time this investigation was made there were in a certain workhouse two feeble-minded mothers : one, a prostitute, had seven or eight illegitimate children, and the other had nine children, each by a different father. The superior fertility of the feeble-minded has been proved beyond dispute by statistical enquiry. The White Paper issued by the Local Government Board on the number of children born of feeble-minded mothers in the workhouses of England and Wales during 1912 would seem to disprove that: but the absurdly low figures which it gives are undoubtedly the results of unsystematic classification, for it is admitted that in several Unions no figures bearing on the subject were recorded.

The actual number of feeble-minded prostitutes is of course quite unascertainable. But all who work among prostitutes are agreed that they form a very large proportion of the cases with which they come in contact. Mrs. Ruspini and Miss Helen Benington, two witnesses before the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded, gave respectively 50 per cent. and 30 per cent. as the proportion of feeble-minded in the cases rescued by them. A medical woman, formerly connected with the Lock Hospital of a large Scottish city, writes to us :— " More than half of my girls were sillies mentally, or markedly deficient morally, and it was most difficult getting them to see things from any rational standpoint. Some, not many, were imbeciles." Two ladies with wide experience of rescue and social work in London

and Chatham estimate the feeble-minded as 25 per cent. of all prostitutes, and describe them as being often very good-natured and happy-go-lucky and consequently most attractive. Mrs. Bramwell Booth deposed before the Royal Commission in 1905 that of 5,518 new cases that had come to the Salvation Army during three years 573 were feeble-minded, and some details concerning each of these feeble-minded women is given in Volume II of evidence (p. 174 *et seq.*). A very large proportion of these 573 are prostitutes, for we have it from Mrs. Bramwell Booth<sup>1</sup> herself that in nearly all cases where the woman is spoken of as "wrong-doing," "living in sin," or "living a bad life," prostitution may be inferred.

<sup>2</sup>In an intensive study of 647 prostitutes committed to the State Reformatory for Women at Bedford Hills, the superintendent, Dr. Katherine Davis, found that 107 were "distinctly feeble-minded." Fifty-two others are border-line cases. Dr. Davis adds, "This is the group which gives most trouble in all reformatory institutions. It is safe to say that 90 per cent. of all disciplinary difficulties come from cases of this sort." Further, 116 of the inmates were tested by a psychologist who used the Binet Scale for measuring intelligence. The result was as follows.

Showing mentality of 5 year old child	2
" " " 6 " " "	1
" " " 7 " " "	6
" " " 8 " " "	6
" " " 9 " " "	29
" " " 10 " " "	44
" " " 11 " " "	26
" " " 12 " " "	2—116

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded.

<sup>2</sup> "Commercialised Prostitution in New York," Kneeland, p. 187.

Nevertheless it must be remembered that the proportion of feeble-minded among the prostitutes known by rescue-workers is likely to be greater than the proportion of feeble-minded among all prostitutes. For to the Rescue Home or prison come first of all the drunken, the diseased and the fertile prostitutes. And these, as we have pointed out, are the characteristics of the feeble-minded prostitutes. We must therefore allow for a counterbalancing proportion of prostitutes of normal intelligence who by the exercise of the virtues of temperance and cleanliness keep on the streets and out of the Rescue Home. Moreover the term "feeble-minded" is very loosely used by the lay observer. Rescue workers often so describe cases that are suffering from insanity supervening on a depraved life or chronic alcoholism, and others that are merely dull or silly girls who could not be certified as mentally deficient under any Act.

Indeed we learn from officers engaged in the administration of the Mental Deficiency Act that they come across persons who regard any unconventional manifestation of sex in an unmarried woman as *ipso facto* "moral imbecility" or "mental deficiency." They would make the bearing of an illegitimate child (or more often of two illegitimate children) an excuse for segregating the mother for life, whatever her mental state. Fortunately, this highly unphysiological point of view is at present unsupported by the law.

The Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 is clumsy and ill-drafted but it contains many valuable provisions which, owing to the War, are not yet being fully used by Local Authorities. It provides for the certification and permanent detention of feeble-minded persons who are committed to prison for any offence, or who are found by the Poor Law or any charitable society to be destitute. It also recognises for the first time



a class of "moral imbeciles" i.e., "persons who from an early age display some permanent mental defect coupled with strong vicious or criminal propensities on which punishment has had little or no deterrent effect." It seems reasonable to believe that in course of time the majority of mentally afflicted prostitutes can by this means be swept from the streets. Other clauses of the Act, e.g., those which empower Local Authorities to remove feeble-minded persons of any age who are being "neglected, abandoned or cruelly treated" to appropriate institutions, should ultimately dry up the supply of this class of prostitute at its source.

#### NATURAL PROPENSITY.

The following are examples of women who were impelled to become prostitutes by their strong sexual appetites. It will be noticed that in several cases the women exacted no price from the men for their services and thus were not technically prostitutes. But for the purposes of our enquiry they may be so considered, for the relationship in which they stand to the men is the same irresponsible and temporary relationship as that between prostitute and client and has the same physical and mental effects. Moreover such women often subsequently become prostitutes in the technical sense of the word.

L. B. was a feeble-minded girl, living at home and working at daily places. She would not stay in at night and would get any man to go with her. She was certified as feeble-minded and placed in a home. After she had begun to improve a little her father, who was required to pay for her maintenance, took her away. She seems to have been a prostitute.

E. S., a weak-minded girl who has been prosecuted for stealing more than once, was in domestic service and is

described as a good worker. At twenty-two she was the mother of three illegitimate children and married the father of the third after its birth. She has all the animal instincts strongly developed except mother love: "a cat looks after its kittens better than she did." She has been prosecuted for neglect and cruelty to her children, but it is true that she had no means of supporting them well and honestly.

T. O., a feeble-minded girl, was brought before the magistrates at the age of sixteen for dishonesty. She stole cigars "to give her boys."

J. E., was one of a large family, born in Newcastle, where her father worked in one of the shipyards. She was rather strictly brought up, but is uneducated and below the average in intelligence. For a time she worked in a jam factory at 5s. a week. At the age of nineteen her natural appetite led her into sexual indulgence. When nearly twenty she had a child while living at home: it survived three months. Then she "took to the game on the quiet for the sake of the money." She has lived by prostitution in Newcastle, Manchester, and Liverpool. When about twenty-three she came to London and now lives in the East End and comes "up West" in the evening and takes her clients to some place in the Tottenham Court Road. It took her some time to realise the possibilities of prostitution, but when she did she adopted the life without hesitation and now compares her present with her former circumstances, much to the disadvantage of the latter. She is doing fairly well, but is lazy and drinks.

P. I. is an undersized and unattractive girl who left a Special School a few years ago to go into service. Already she has had many situations with tradespeople in the neighbourhood and in every one of them she has followed the same procedure. She brings rebuke upon

herself by her inefficiency and then accuses the master of assaulting her. Her former teachers are convinced from their knowledge of the girl that her accusations are false, but she is a circumstantial romancer and has already broken up at least one happy home. She will probably become a prostitute by profession when she has exhausted the available situations in her neighbourhood. She is superficially of fair intelligence and would be difficult to certify under the new Act.

K. T. is a rather attractive quaint little girl of eleven who has been in a Special School for some years. She chatters brightly about her family, etc., and seems precocious rather than defective to the untrained observer. Her most curious characteristic is a habit of wandering at night. Again and again (over a period of several years) she was brought home by the police in the small hours, and on one occasion she stopped out all night. She never spoke to anyone, even to her child friends, about her adventures, and when questioned by adults pretended she had forgotten all about it. Finally she was committed to an Industrial Home and it was then discovered that she was a notorious prostitute among "bad boys," and would "do anything" with them. Her mother has been quite aware of her actions and her brother is known to have had immoral relations with her three years ago. K. T.'s own motives and emotions remain a mystery, for she assumes an impenetrable air of innocence and continues to say nothing.

#### NON-RESISTANCE.

The following are cases of girls who do not appear to have shown any strong sexual impulse but whose facility of disposition made them agree to become prostitutes. In the evidence before the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded it was shown how eagerly

ill-conditioned parents will seek to retain control over feeble-minded daughters whose docility makes them a valuable asset.

D. I. and E. R. are two feeble-minded girls who came to Rescue Homes at the ages of 17 and 25, having lived as prostitutes under the influence of their mothers.

E. O. is a Somersetshire girl of weak intellect, easily led. She lives in a very bad home with her father and stepmother, and was sent out on the streets by her father, who was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for living on her earnings.

I. R. was a very simple girl, but strong, and able to work. The parents were watched by the N.S.P.C.C. on account of neglecting her, and they were specially warned about letting her go with gangs of men to work in the fields, but they took no notice. At sixteen she was seduced, and at seventeen she became a prostitute.

K. O., a mentally deficient girl of rather a high type, was spoilt by quite a nice, respectable mother. She was very sentimental and easily led. She got in with bad companions, left home for a common lodging-house, and was soon on the streets.

E. M. was an illegitimate child who was adopted by a couple who had lost their only child. She remarked that she seemed to have been in the way ever since she was born. She is a foolish, weak, unbalanced girl, below the average in intelligence. She continued to live with her foster-parents after her childhood and went to work in a drapery-store, and was also for a time in the pantomime in Leicester. At the age of nineteen she was seduced under promise of marriage by a man who turned out to be already married. E. still refuses to hear anything against this man. Three years later she came to London to try to get work in the pantomime but could get no engagement and was seen, flashily

dressed, in the Leicester Lounge. Her costume was a borrowed one, as she had sold her own the week before for 10s. She had been in London for five weeks and in that time had only secured one client. She had been ill all the time, had been turned out of her room for non-payment of rent, and had not had a good meal for a fortnight. She was thoroughly disgusted with the life and had written to her foster-parents for money.

N. A., mentally dull and very deaf, was living at home and doing daily work. At the age of twenty-one she was seduced by her master, an iron merchant, after which she went out in the evenings. Her parents only discovered the life she was leading when she showed signs of pregnancy.

E. J., a feeble-minded girl quite unable to take care of herself, was in service. First she was in a large house for sixteen months, secondly at a hotel for six months, then in a public-house. At the age of twenty she was found on waste ground sleeping with boys. A soldier then took her to another city to be married and she became a prostitute. She is now in a workhouse certified as feeble-minded.

I. D. was in service, but could not keep her places. She is incapable, weak, easily led, lazy and bad-tempered. She was allowed to stay out till 11 p.m. and thus lapsed at first. Then she took money from the men with whom she went. Later she became pregnant. Then, "driven to desperation for means of support," she continued her prostitution; she did not go on the streets, but relied for custom on the tradesmen and workmen she had known when in situations.

### THE ACCIDENTS OF LIFE

In giving examples of the various dangers that beset the feeble-minded we are traversing the ground that is



covered in other chapters, for most of these are perils that threaten all. But it is important to note how powerfully they act on the feeble-minded.

A. P., a feeble-minded girl working in a laundry, lost her mother at sixteen, and, having no one to look after her, was led into prostitution by bad companions.

Mrs. T. A., slightly mentally deficient, lost her husband when she was twenty-nine. She then took to drink and became a prostitute at thirty-two.

E. V., weak-minded, was in domestic service. At sixteen she had a baby who died, and she then took to prostitution, "probably owing to immoral tendencies and despair." Her baby's death unsettled her so that she was too restless to stay anywhere long, and wandered round in homes, refuges, and domestic service, sometimes staying out all night, and sometimes on the streets.

O. P., a feeble-minded woman, was general servant at a beer-house in Manchester at 4s. a week. At the age of twenty-three she was wronged by her master, and had to go to the workhouse, where her baby was born. After she had been twelve months in the workhouse her baby died. She then went to an aunt, but would not stay with her, and could not get on in domestic service, so went on the streets.

F. U. is slightly feeble-minded, though she does not appear so to casual observers. She worked in various factories, and as general servant in coffee shops for short periods, but constantly left her work, would do nothing at home, nor keep herself clean. When eighteen she went wrong through idleness and bad companions, and ran away from home to a common lodging-house. Afterwards she became a prostitute.

L. X., feeble-minded, washed up in coffee-houses, but wandered away and lost her places. She was weak,

lazy, dirty in her habits, and has an uncontrollable temper. She stayed where she could, sometimes with her own relations. At seventeen she became a prostitute to try to get money without working for it.

O. C. was in service, but became a prostitute when twenty because, she says, she was "too indolent to work."

L. E., feeble-minded, was a fairly good general servant. At the age of twenty-seven she first began to go wrong, owing, our informant thinks, to "her feeble-mindedness and bad temper." At thirty she had got so low and looked so dreadful that no one would give her work, and so she became a prostitute.

M. I., so feeble-minded and dirty that no one would keep her in service, when twenty-one spent several nights with a prostitute on F—— Road with soldiers. She was then taken to another city "to be married," and spent 5s. 6d. on drink. She is now in the workhouse, certified as feeble-minded.

N. A., a slightly weak-minded girl, working in a paper mill, was seduced under promise of marriage at eighteen, and had a baby which lived a few months. After her disappointment in her young man, to whom she had been very devoted, she became thoroughly reckless and went on the streets.

X. Y., the daughter of a prosperous family, was a very pretty girl, but showed unmistakable signs of mental deficiency. At nineteen she ran away from home and went into the chorus of a musical comedy under an assumed name. She got into the company of several very prosperous prostitutes, who were proud of her acquaintance and flattered her. After a time she went wrong. The other chorus-girls all laughed at her as "soft," and she was very slow and stupid, and careless about her clothes.

## CHAPTER IX

### PROSTITUTION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

WE have as far as possible left to this chapter considerations of the risks incidental to industry and various conditions of employment, though histories bearing on the subject have been quoted in other sections. We do not propose to describe the various dangers which may befall any woman going about her business, but only those which arise directly out of the way in which the labour market in general and certain establishments in particular are organised.

It has been stated again and again by various writers and rescue workers that prostitution is not an economic question. Our enquiry leads us to suppose that this conclusion is based on two misapprehensions. Firstly it arises from the fact that a prostitute rarely gives poverty as the reason for her downfall. This proves nothing, for the class from which she is most likely to come regards poverty as a fish might regard the sea in which it swims ; it seems the natural element in which all life is supported. And secondly it arises from a definition, as schoolboyish as the definition of " wealth " as " money," of " economic pressure " as " low wages." Yet it is plain that a woman may earn a good wage for nine months in the year and yet be forced into prostitution by economic pressure during the other three months of the year. And she may even earn a good wage all the year round, and yet be forced into prostitution by the

conditions under which she must work to get this wage. We must regard as insidious forms of pressure all such industrial risks as dependence on a man in authority for obtaining or keeping a situation : the enforced companionship of persons of low moral standard : conditions which, by exercising an unhealthy influence on mind or body, increase susceptibility to chance temptations : or the publicity of certain occupations, which, by bringing a girl before the notice of men and into their company, afford opportunities alike of marriage, illicit association, or prostitution.

In the following chapter we have not endeavoured to describe or discuss the economic position of women, but simply to present various facts collected by this enquiry which show a connection between prostitution and unemployment, low wages, and occupational conditions.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT

Over four per cent. of the collected cases fell into prostitution through unemployment. The perils arising from this condition are not quite so simple as at first sight might appear. Lack of money is indeed the most serious and the most obvious, but to this is often added the simultaneous loss of a home, exposure to the temptations of the procurers who hang round the registry office, and that powerful factor in the deterioration of the unemployed, the discouragement which accompanies even the most temporary experience of being unwanted in the general scheme of things. It is a condition incidental to most callings—even the wife may be widowed or deserted—but it is liable to occur more suddenly, more often, or for more prolonged periods to some workers, such as barmaids or chorus-girls, than to others. And where it is rarest, as in domestic service, where the

demand usually exceeds the supply, it is very dangerous when it does occur : for it throws a young girl who is unaccustomed to independence and the privilege of choosing for herself out into a strange world, where the evilly disposed are especially eager to offer assistance and sympathy, just at a time when she is likely to be excited or depressed and a little off her balance. The shop girl who has been " living in " also loses her home with her job, and has but a week's notice instead of the servant's month. Moreover she has as a rule less opportunity for saving against such mishaps out of her wages.

But even more important than this kind of unemployment are the slack times of seasonal trades. The optimism of the human being is apt to minimise in advance the chances and duration of these regular periods, so that the probable is still the unexpected when it arrives. Mrs. Barbara Drake, in discussing the tailoring trade, says, " Seasonal fluctuations are said to be on the increase. The summer season, which formerly commenced in April, is now postponed till May, and this compression of a four months' season into a three months' season has considerably increased the seasonal pressure of recent years." <sup>1</sup> And even were these slack seasons wisely foreseen, the wages in such occupations are seldom such as would afford a sufficient income if spread over the whole year. In the clothing trade, for example, 13s. 10d. is the average workshop wage and 15s. 5d. the average factory wage.<sup>2</sup> In the millinery trade, the great majority of experienced hands cannot earn more than 13s. to 19s. a week.

There is no doubt that many workers are forced to

<sup>1</sup> " Earnings and Hours Inquiry." Report on the Clothing Trade, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> " Seasonal Trades," 1914.



take to the streets to tide over these lean months. This intermittent prostitution, like that of married women, is very difficult to detect, since the girl who is a prostitute for only three months in the year is four times less likely than the regular prostitute to become one of the wrecks who seek shelter at the homes where most of our histories have been collected. Moreover, as she has the prospect of returning to work as an equal among respectable women, she is not likely to confess her temporary lapse. But from outside observers and from the workers themselves we learn that the seasonal occupation automatically condemns many of its hands to regular periods of prostitution.

We have evidence that this is the case among dress-makers, who from our own calculations furnish only a small proportion of regular prostitutes. The "first bodice hand" in a big West End establishment says that slack times are responsible for a good deal of moral laxity among shop assistants and the models in dress-making establishments. An immoral life is a subject not mentioned among the assistants where she is now employed, but she knows that at least two of their hands are earning money in this way when not at work. Another dressmaker tells us that she has seen sad results when a young woman has innocently borrowed money from her sweetheart during her slack season ; for a girl in such circumstances feels that she is not in a position to refuse anything he may ask of her, while he may prove less disinterested than she in her simplicity believed him. We also learn that danger from corruption by fellow-workers is much increased in employments where slack seasons occur. Certain shops are accustomed to put their workers on quarter or half time so that girls receive only 4s. or 5s. a week. Being at the same time in touch with seasoned prostitutes who have perhaps been work-

ing beside them for months, they are often tempted to make a beginning themselves.

In dressmaking and in tailoring the special danger of the seasonal trade, the fact that the girl dare not take up another calling or she may lose the opportunity of taking up her work again, is seen in its most vicious form. A tailoress has to call at her workshop every day, sometimes two or three times daily, the whole year round, even though for weeks together there is work for her on only one or two days a week. The work comes in quite unexpectedly and must be done at once. Should a West End tailoress turn away in despair at the irregularity of her employment and take up the more regular slop-work of the East End she loses not only her place in her workroom, but also her skill, for the two kinds of tailoring are entirely different.

Other occupations liable to perilous seasonal dislocation are the overstocked industry of millinery; the lower ranks of the theatrical profession, where good clothes and a smart appearance are necessary for the effective seeking of a new engagement, and there are long periods of fictitious unemployment, when a girl is attending rehearsals, yet is not regarded as "working" so far as payment is concerned; exhibition attendants and waitresses, who run the risk of making undesirable acquaintances at their work.

The trade of millinery, which employs 15,000 hands, is said to be more affected by seasonality than any other. In a recently published work on "Seasonal Trades" we are told "only two classes, milliners and apprentices, are paid all the year round. The largest class, that of assistants, is worst treated. Not only are these girls given long unpaid-for holidays, but in very many cases the employers do not trouble to mitigate the evil. One is told that they are suddenly turned off without warn-

ing, the employer fearing, say at Christmas, that if they get wind of a likely discharge, they will leave earlier than he could wish, to get one of the many temporary jobs vacant at Christmas."

There are some industries, if so they can be called, which afford no general training that can be turned to account in other callings, and which automatically discharge their workers when they have lost their youth or health. Such is the plight of the ballet-girl whose skill deserts her through illness or the advance of middle-age, and the artist's model. And perhaps the most striking and the most hopeless of these cases is the *mannequin*, the living model for the display of fashionable clothing. These are usually beautiful girls who have grown accustomed to luxurious surroundings in their profession, and see no alternative before them when their livelihood fails them except to find a market for their only asset—their good looks—elsewhere. One hopes that many are fortunate enough to find a permanent protector in a husband before the other alternative presents itself.

Since we deal with a subject where it is hard enough to get a few facts, and quite impossible to get any figures, we cannot discuss the wider question of how prostitution is influenced by cycles of unemployment. We refer the reader to Bebel's "Woman" for support of the theory that morals fluctuate with trade. It is true that during the trade depression consequent on the South African War the tariff of London prostitutes declined rapidly, but it cannot be judged how far this was due to the fact that men had less money to spend on luxuries or to increased competition among women.

Those who deny a relation between prostitution and poverty may say, "No woman need sell herself, for there is always the workhouse to fall back upon." This has

been answered by Miss Norah Hall, of the Church Army, in her evidence before the Royal Commission on the Poor Law, 1908: "I have noticed there is a tendency to hector, if not to bully, girls and young women who through seasonal slackness of trade are driven to apply for workhouse orders. Some such dialogue as the following is of not infrequent occurrence. A girl on the borderline of temptation says to one of our out-of-door rescue workers: 'Trade is slack; I cannot keep straight or I shall starve.' 'Oh,' replies the rescue worker, 'why don't you go to the workhouse till times improve?' After some conversation they go to the relief officer together. The relieving officer who hears the application proceeds to bully and hector the girl: 'What do you mean,' he says, 'by going on the rates? The House is not meant for strong young women like you! What next, if the ratepayers have to keep such people as you? etc., etc.' . . . As a result the girl turns away from the 'window' ashamed and scared, and nothing will induce her to renew the application. What follows I need not describe."

If such a girl should persist and enter the workhouse, one cannot imagine that this sort of treatment, combined with the company she will probably meet there, is likely to raise her self-respect or be an assistance to her in any future attempt to find a footing in the labour market. Again, should she some evening in desperation enter the casual ward, she is not, as we are told by Mrs. Higgs in "*Glimpses into the Abyss*," safe from insult or worse. After noting other cases in Chapters IV. and V., we shall not be disposed to blame those who avoid the workhouse at all costs.

In the following instances destitution pure and simple seems to have been the motive for taking to prostitution.

D. P., a Jewess, was a tailoress in Manchester. She

seems dull and can neither read nor write. She was often out of work through slackness in the tailoring, and on one occasion when she had earned nothing her stepmother turned her out of doors. So since the age of seventeen she has always gone on the streets when unemployed, though she always takes work when she can get it, as she hates the life. She found when twenty that she was pregnant, and came to London, where she found respectable work. She afterwards entered a Rescue Home.

L. L. comes from a South London suburb. She belonged to a theatrical family and had an irregular sort of upbringing. Her mother died when she was about thirteen, her father when she was seventeen and a half. She was apprenticed to professional acrobats when twelve and left school when fourteen. From that time onwards she has been on the music-hall stage. Her engagements were mostly on the Continent, as one of a troupe of young girls who went about in charge of a woman. When she was seventeen and a half the troupe disbanded, and she found herself without resources, and absolutely at her wits' end for money. She says that at the time she was ignorant of the existence of such a thing as prostitution, and that she took to it at the suggestion of a Jewess. When met by our informant she was nearly eighteen, and was very hard up, and in arrears with her rent.

O. O. was a photographer's assistant from Lancashire. Her parents were dead and her health was bad. When twenty-four she became ill and had to spend all her savings. Being destitute she went on the streets. She was admitted to a home a few months later and afterwards removed to an infirmary.

J. J. was a barmaid. A prostitute came into the bar and wanted a drink, but had no money to pay for



it. The girl gave her the drink and was instantly dismissed. She did not know what to do, and so joined forces with this woman. She died in a home at the age of twenty-eight.

F. P., an intelligent woman, kept house for her stepfather till she was nineteen and then went to service. When twenty-one she was not comfortable in her situation and left it. Her friends would not have her so she took a room. After two months of unemployment she was unable to pay her rent, so she recklessly went on the streets in the neighbourhood of Aldershot.

H. H., when about nineteen, came over from Germany. She could get no work and became ill. She met a girl who told her that if she came with her she would get money, and took her on the streets. After two months she was brought to a home by a man who had known her in Germany. She was sent to the Lock Hospital, and took her discharge a little later.

G. G., a slightly mentally deficient girl who lived in lodgings, was employed in the fur trade and was often out of work. At the age of twenty-nine she was driven on the streets by unemployment.

S. Y., an artificial flower-mounter, went wrong when twenty, and became a prostitute at twenty-eight because her health would not permit her to make a living respectably. She then went into the workhouse.

M. W. was a dressmaker in a midland town. She was seduced when seventeen and a half. She came to London when nearly twenty-one, and was employed in a West End shop, living in. She was dismissed after five months. Our informant suggests that it was on account of loose habits, but it occurred in June, and this would be near the conclusion of the busy season. She was met with four months later. She had become a prostitute, for, as she said, "One must live."

F. F., a slightly mentally deficient girl, was in service for two years, and was then persuaded by a girl friend to leave and go to work in a boot factory. She remained at the factory for a few months, earning about 7s. to 8s. a week at piecework. Then work got slack and she was turned off. She had no money to pay for her lodgings and, through the influence of her girl friends, went on the streets at the age of eighteen.

A. Y., an obvious Cockney, says she is from Normandy, and that she has been eight years in England, that she married and had two children, and that her husband was imprisoned for bigamy. All this is as likely as not a romance. She says, and this our informant has reason to believe, that she was a model for trying on at a corsetiere's establishment until she got appendicitis. After the operation she became too thin to resume her employment and so when twenty-five became a prostitute. When seen she was a very charming woman of twenty-eight. She says her two children are boarded out, and that she is saving up to start a flower-shop, as she is specially fond of flowers.

V. F. was a mannequin. She lost her work and there was nothing she could do except prostitution. She has a flat and will probably get some man to keep her.

Y. P. was a girl without relatives. She was employed as a milliner and at seventeen fell out of work. While she was going about looking for a job a man followed her, spoke to<sup>r</sup> her, and asked her to have a meal with him, which she badly wanted. Soon afterwards she was on Piccadilly.

G. P. was brought up at a country workhouse after the death of her parents. She afterwards lived with an aunt. She then went into service, became ill, and was employed at a London Hospital, and then went to a convalescent home. She took another situation and

met with friends who seem to have led her wrong. At eighteen she first lapsed. At nineteen she ran away from a situation after a quarrel with the cook, and as she could not get work she went on the streets.

In the following three instances the girl was of bad character and upbringing, though it was unemployment that gave her the final impetus into prostitution.

Z. G. was badly brought up. Her father died when she was very young and her mother when she was fifteen, and her brothers took no interest in her welfare. She has evidently been familiar with prostitution from childhood and seems never to have viewed it with any repugnance. She has been a barmaid and has also had experience in selling cheap jewellery. But she is small and plain, so the competition for barmaids' situations proved too keen for her, and the jewellery business afforded her only a very precarious living. So when about twenty-two and a half she just dropped into prostitution, as she would change from the licensed trade to jewellery vending. After five months of prostitution she had not yet felt the pinch of real poverty.

L. V. had a mother who was for five years in the infirmary. When she was eighteen her father died and the home was broken up, and thus she first "went wrong." She had a child. L. lived in one room with her baby and her mother, who had come out of the infirmary, and occasionally went to live with her child's father. Since her schooldays she was employed in step-cleaning, housework, and in a sweet factory where many rough girls work, where the payment is low, averaging 7s. a week for piecework, and there are often slack seasons. When nineteen, owing to slackness of work and a low moral standard, she became a prostitute. The father of her baby paid 2s. 6d. weekly for twelve months, but then

refused to continue payment owing to the girl's conduct with other men.

S. C., a slightly mentally deficient girl of low type, had no home. Her only relative was a sister in the workhouse, and she has always associated with people of bad character in Tottenham. She was employed as French polisher in a cabinet factory, earning about 8s. weekly at piecework. Work was often slack. She became a prostitute, partly on account of slackness of work, but mainly on account of the low moral standard of her companions.

### LOW WAGES

Though statistically low wages are not often given as the cause of taking to prostitution, there are several reasons for believing that poverty is a more powerful factor than the figures allow.

The emphatic statements of rescue workers to the effect that "low wages have little to do with prostitution" rarely come from a considered survey of the problem, but simply mean that those girls who come under their observation do not themselves give this as the circumstance which drove them to the streets. This is a worthless test. In the first place, the girl who goes on the streets because she is tired of continuous underpayment, long hours, and inadequate food and clothing, is not likely to be classified, when after weeks or months or years she enters a home or prison, as having taken to this life because her wages were low. She will more probably be described as having done so for the sake of dress or amusements, to "see life," or on account of some incident which immediately preceded the first step. For in many cases it is true that she was not starving in the sense of being unable to obtain sufficient bread to keep her alive, though she was practically

starving both in body and mind, and those things she sought rather than what she gave up are impressed upon her mind. The tendency of the religious workers who draw up most of such statistics is to forget all but the material needs of the human being. They forget that even if a woman's labour brings her food and shelter and clothing the vital necessity of enjoyment is still lacking, and that she will be tempted to buy it with her only other asset, her sexual attraction. The imperative desire for self-realisation by experience of those entrancing pleasures and interests of life which we have considered in Chapter III. make a wage on the subsistence level very little protection from prostitution. In any case we rarely get adequate data from which to draw our deductions, for there is also in all likelihood a tendency to state the highest wage rather than the average earned, since the pride of the worker would naturally dwell on this by preference. In the second place the prostitution of the underpaid worker is often clandestine and intermittent: a girl may resort to it to raise money for some emergency such as temporary unemployment, the illness of a relative, or the need for new clothes. She is therefore unlikely to enter the prison or the Rescue Home or to confess her expedient. However, the evidence of those who have watched a woman's temptation and believe that she has gone under offers itself here instead.

Moreover, the rescue worker is so far right in this: *very* low wages do not seem to cause prostitution. Unless the sweated worker rebels in her extreme youth, her toil saps her vital energies so that she cannot break away from her routine. Even if she could she would find no market, for her work has taken away the beauty and charm required by the socially superior client, and the men of her own class have no money to spend on luxuries.



Nor indeed do these latter need to spend money on sexual indulgence, for the bad housing and general depression of poverty foster a promiscuity in which the professional prostitute is starved out by the unpaid blackleg. And any exceptions who do pass into prostitution from this class are not easily discovered, since the loss of character does not affect the sweated worker as it does the domestic servant: should she fail on the streets she can pass straight back into her old employment without having to pass through a Rescue Home.

In considering how far inadequate wages do drive women to prostitution we cannot present a coherent argument. As it is difficult to find out the economic position of women in an industry or in a town, and quite impossible to find out the conditions of prostitution in that industry or in that town, one cannot arrive at satisfactory generalisations by contrasting them. All that we can do is to discuss certain facts which have been brought before us by unbiassed witnesses.

If we turn first to that vast class, the factory workers, we find that their wages vary not only from district to district, but also from factory to factory; and the moral conditions seem to be as variable. Those who care to generalise on so wide a subject usually tell us that the factory girl on the whole is at once self-respecting and lax in her moral code; she gives herself to her lover or lovers but scorns to take money. One may imagine that such a code might spring up among people whose emotional life was stimulated by the contact of the sexes during work and where women are sure enough of economic independence to dispense with the guarantees of marriage: so it is not surprising that we have evidence of this attitude in several textile factories in the North. But this account of the moral code may sometimes be a picturesque representation of the promiscuity en-

gendered by extreme poverty. A correspondent writes concerning Finsbury and Shoreditch : " There is very little (if any) organised vice in the Borough, but a very low standard of morals. I think the causes of this state of things are in a great measure the overcrowding and low wages paid to the girl workers in the factories. The majority of them earn only 5s. or 6s. a week, and in many cases work in very bad moral surroundings."

A more exact account of a similar state of things comes from a medical woman who ran a club for factory girls and has been physician to the Rescue Home in a certain manufacturing town of the South Midlands. She tells us that there promiscuity and not prostitution is the usual thing, though some of the girls are known to take money while working in the factory. The girls begin work at wages of from 6s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. a week, and only the pick of them can hope to rise to the maximum of 15s. after ten years or so. At the time our informant wrote they were working full legal hours, *i.e.*, 8 to 8. A girl whose wage is as low as this is badly dressed, so she cannot command respect. For instance, when some of the club girls are taken for an outing, men will call out to them and chaff them in the street, as they would not dream of doing to better dressed girls. These girls usually live at home, but are quite undisciplined and stop out late at night. B—— Street is a dreadful sight in the evening, for it is there that these factory girls walk the streets. Most of them do not take money but go with men they like, and those that are paid ask no more than sixpence or eightpence. Thus women are so cheap that there is little chance for the professional prostitute and therefore presumably little temptation to adopt the profession. Now and then a girl comes to grief in some way, but most of them eventually marry, though rarely without previous sexual experience. Our

informant, who regards this state of things as most deplorable from a religious point of view, tells us that it is a remarkable fact that out of seventy confinements among these girls, only three cases of syphilis occurred among the infants, and in one of these the disease was acquired accidentally and not by sexual intercourse. Another medical woman, practising in this district after previous experience elsewhere, has also been amazed at the absence of syphilitic births. Ignorance contributes largely to the lapses of many of these girls. They have no idea how to take care of themselves, and, like certain Australian tribes, are genuinely unaware of the natural consequences of sexual intercourse and surprised when maternity follows.

But in many cases the wages received by factory workers are at the level that drives women to prostitution. The authors of "Women's Work and Wages" estimate that in Birmingham the work girl should spend about 14s. a week to "keep herself respectable and healthy," while the average wage there is barely 10s., and four to six weeks must be deducted annually for sickness and slackness of trade when no wage is received. "In the sweating trades," write these authors, "it always means either that the worker is slowly deteriorated as a worker, or else is subsidised by Poor Law relief and private charity, or else finds money in a way that is far more common than the average respectable person thinks." Again, referring to "the oldest trade in the world," they write "that this is an economic element in the wage question is beyond all doubt." And when we realise that of the textile workers, the aristocrats of the factory, 13·3 per cent. make under 10s. a week, 52·1 per cent. make under 15s. a week, 79 per cent. make under 20s. a week, and only 21 per cent. make any sum over 20s. a week, we may take it for granted

that these conditions held in other places than Birmingham.

We have indeed much testimony to this effect from the workers themselves. Mrs. T., a member of the Women's Co-operative Guild in a manufacturing town, writes concerning the life of some hat-trimmers. They are employed for eleven hours a day and are in the work-rooms for thirteen. She does not tell us exactly what they earn, but she gives us to understand that the wages are low, and we know that the average weekly earnings in this trade are 13s. 10d. She writes that one girl, B. L., is being tempted. When Mrs. T. talks to her about it B. replies, "Mrs. T., when will it all end, work and no pleasure? I want to go to the Empire, I want to see life, to go away for holidays!" Mrs. T. looks round at some of the trimmers, good women, who have nothing before them but the workhouse, and sees that side of the question. B. has stayed away from work on the day that Mrs. T. writes to us: if she returns to-morrow Mrs. T. will talk to her once more, and then give it up. She has to admit the truth. "It's all right to be good, but the other thing pays better." Mrs. T. herself longs to give up all this drudgery and devote herself to more interesting work.

V. L., a fairly intelligent girl, tells us that she worked in a clothing factory in the Midlands for a few weeks at a weekly wage of 7s. to 10s., out of which she had to provide thread and other necessities, which left her only 5s. a week or even less. Afterwards she took work home to do. At seventeen she mixed with bad girl companions and went wrong: she went with a soldier at Bristol on Saturday and Sunday. She says that she did it in the first instance to get boots, and that it would never have happened if she had been given some clothes.

And in addition to the general economic level of

factory workers we must consider the little crevasses of ill-luck into which fall workers with no special talent which makes it worth Society's while to pull them out. The following case cannot be considered the general rule, but nevertheless describes the fate of a large number of women.

A working woman from a manufacturing village in Derbyshire tells us that she has known many girls working in the factories who have disappeared and are believed to have gone under. If, as she puts it, they go for the day to Nottingham, they don't seem able to settle again. She appears to feel that this is due to the low wages paid in the factories, and her narrative suggests how this factor operates, and why it does not appear as the cause when later on the girl is "rescued." For poverty works not by acute physical starvation, but by a subtle discouragement and sense of failure as an honest woman, which prepares the way for snatching at the good things of life when they are offered, no matter at what price. This woman started work in a cotton mill more than twenty years ago. As she could earn no more than 4s. 3d. a week she left it after eleven months for a candle-wick mill. But here she was no better off and sometimes worse: after several years her wages were only 5s. She married in the village, and can testify that wages for beginners are still the same in both mills. When her daughter started work in the mill at which her mother made her own industrial beginning, she earned the same sum, 4s. 3d. After five weeks she was put on piecework and got 4s. 7½d., 5s. 2d., and 6s. 1½d. Her master then said she was getting on too fast and gave her different work, so on the ninth week she only got 3s. 9½d. The mother and daughter then made up their minds that it was impossible for her to get on there, and she went into service. Her first situation was unsatisfactory,



but she found another at Herne Bay where she has been doing well for thirteen months and earns 16s. 8d. a week.

Strong character saw that woman and her daughter safely through temptation, but here are particulars of one who had not that advantage. Susie Morris was their neighbour's daughter. Both her parents "liked their beer," but the mother has been better since the death of her husband twelve months ago, and has done all she could for her family. Susie went to a factory on leaving school, earning some weeks 2s. and others nothing. One week she told her mother that she expected to draw 5s. or 6s., but when Friday came she got nothing at all; it seemed her work had not been very good, although she had worked daily from 6 a.m. till 5.30 p.m. and till noon on Saturday. Susie did not go home that Friday night. Precisely what she was doing we are not told, but eventually her mother had to send for her to come home. She left the mill and went to service in Nottingham, and turned out a good girl for twelve months. Then she came home and began to drift again after keeping house for a man in the village, and passing rapidly into two other situations and out of them, she went to Leicester, ostensibly to a situation in a hotel there. But when her mother wrote there for news of her daughter they replied that they did not know her whereabouts beyond the fact that she was still in Leicester.

We must now leave this rather obscure subject, remembering that the factory girl is driven to prostitution by other influences which we discuss later under the heading "Occupational Conditions."

There seems to be a general consensus of opinion that a good deal of prostitution, more or less clandestine, exists among shop-assistants, although they seldom come to either rescue home, Lock ward, or prison. In a cer-

tain proportion of cases this is not due to the conditions of their employment. For girls who are kept by men are sometimes required by their protectors to work at a shop during the day, probably to occupy their time and keep them faithful. In such cases the low wage is a minor consideration, since the men are probably giving them at least two or three pounds a week and providing a home. Others who are already prostitutes seek posts in shops without much thought of the wages for the sake of meeting new clients. We are told on the authority of the Shop Assistants' Union of one establishment where the girls were recently working for next to nothing, in fact taking the wage of a woman living in and living out ; they were in reality earning their livelihood by prostitution with shopwalkers and other men with whom they came in contact during business hours.

However, it is unquestionable that employers sometimes take advantage of the possibilities open to the shop girl of supplementing her industrial wage when they fix her scale of payment. Usually they excuse themselves by assuming that she is working for pocket-money alone. But it is obviously unlikely that she should come from a class where men can afford to support their adult children, and there is no doubt that, helped by the unhealthy influences of shop life which we discuss later in the chapter, she frequently accepts the employer's suggestion, and goes on the streets.

One must suspect the good faith of the great shop who employed a girl for a year and a half for a wage of 5s. a week. She was then working regularly at the head of her department, and asked for a rise in wages which her employers refused on the ground that she was not strong enough for the work. Nor can the shop which employed P. Y. as messenger girl to take articles to customers' houses at a weekly wage of 6s. have been surprised at

her fate. She had no home, but nevertheless lived for a time on this wage. Then men spoke to her and she went to theatres with them. Eventually she went on the streets, and after three weeks got syphilis. After this she worked as a machinist and was employed at a shop. All the time she was trying to attend the Lock Hospital in secret, but had great difficulty in getting off on the right days. So the disease got hold of her again, and she was several months in hospital. Afterwards she went back to work again. That prostitution is a recognised incident of certain grades of shop life is shown by the story of a girl, living in the suburbs, who obtained a situation in a draper's shop. When she began she found that the wages were so low and her tram fares came to so much that it was not worth her while. She told a fellow worker that she was going to speak to her employer, and ask him to give her a higher wage. "You mustn't do anything like that," replied the girl. "There are other ways. Speak to the manager and he will help you." The girl told her mother of this conversation and was not allowed to return to the shop.

We are not led to suppose that prostitution is as widespread among dressmaking hands as it is among shop-assistants, even in the clandestine and intermittent form we have described elsewhere. The factor of low wages seems to operate chiefly in conjunction with unemployment. V. V., who has been a firstclass skirt hand in several West End establishments, might have lived on her weekly wage of from 18s. to 20s. had it been regular. But she always stood off in slack times, and as a young girl became accustomed to go away for week-ends with gentlemen. And when at forty-two she was out of employment for some months, and had pawned or sold all her clothes, she at last went on the streets to buy food. We are told that prostitution is

more common among the heads than among the hands of dressmaking establishments. A working dressmaker cannot ordinarily save sufficient out of her earnings to start a business on her own. She must have a capitalist behind her to provide the large sum necessary for launching a smart dressmaking or millinery establishment. Sometimes the capitalist is a "protector," and we have been given instances, which are said to be no rare exceptions, where women have found capital by prostitution.

Waitresses are paid extremely low wages with disastrous results. With one large catering firm 10s. a week is considered a very good wage, and girls have been seen at one of their branches having a midday dinner consisting of a bun or piece of bread and a cup of tea. Another catering company pays its waitresses on commission : this is sheer gambling, since, however skilful a waitress may be, she cannot increase her customers' purchases. Two ladies were having tea at one of this company's shops. One of them continued to eat after the bill had been paid. The waitress came up. " I'm so sorry," said the lady, " I've eaten another piece of cake." " That's all right, miss," said the girl. " I'm very glad ; I get a commission on what I sell." " What an absurd system ! " said the lady. " I don't think so, miss. You see, we generally get some good meals in the day." Asked what her wages were she said that they did not come to more than 8s. a week and one meal a day : with commissions and all extras received at the shop real wages might amount to 17s. : the waitresses had to pay for their own washing, and this girl had a mother to support. " You can't live on that ! " said the lady. " No, you can't live on that," said the waitress. " Do most live on it ? " she asked. The girl replied, " No, frankly, I don't think they do."

In a certain teashop in a fashionable London street the waitresses receive wages of 9s. a week : their customers are mainly well-to-do women, but they make only 3s. or 4s. a week in tips. These girls recently held a meeting at which one of them proposed that they should all leave work in a body and go on the streets.

The position of typists and chorus-girls is similar in the need of both for wages largely in excess of the sum necessary for food and shelter and clothing. The wages of typists who have no special commercial training or knowledge of foreign languages vary from 7s. 6d. to £1 10s. a week ; but in all cases they must dress like respectable middle-class girls. The chorus-girl or beginner on the stage cannot earn more than £2 2s. or £3 3s. a week ; but she must present an appearance of physical wellbeing, and must wear " smart " and striking clothes. As both are much exposed to the attentions of men one cannot be surprised that the profession is not invariably the sole source of income. T. D. says she was a typist, earning 15s. a week. She lived all alone, going out in the morning and coming home to her lonely room at night. She could not dress like the other girls because they were living at home and working for pocket-money. This little girl has been a prostitute since she was about twenty, and she says, " though this is a miserable life, I am happier in it than I was when I was a typist." The factor of loneliness is not added to low wages in the case of the actress ; but quite as dangerous to her are the bad companions she is likely to meet.

The reader will already have noticed that a young girl often gets into bad company when employed at a laundry. About 75 per cent. of laundry workers earn under 15s. a week, and the temptation to supplement these earnings by spending the three days a week when



they are not required at the laundry on the streets must be very strong. The fact that we have not many cases of laundry workers who have become regular prostitutes merely proves that the laundry-proprietor does not concern himself with the character of his employees, and has no objection to giving work to a woman who has lapsed.

### OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS

The influence of occupation in leading a woman to enter the ranks of prostitution is important. But those who would eliminate this factor by the simple process of excluding women from industry must remember that, next to domestic service, "no occupation" is the most dangerous vocation in this respect.

One of the most irritating and prevalent of occupational risks is the shocking injustice which girls are liable to suffer when dependent upon the pleasure of a person of the opposite sex for the opportunity to gain a livelihood. Combination and *esprit de corps* are the only things women can bring to bear against this abuse, and men are rapidly developing a sense of sportsmanship in this connection. Less blatant and more insidious are the dangers arising from the enforced companionship of the innocent with the corrupt. The young girl with her habits and principles still in the making observes those around her following certain lines of conduct, and sees no harm in it; or if at first shocked, she gets acclimatised to what Miss Bondfield has called "a highly charged sexual atmosphere," and so drifts into laxity herself before she has found her bearings.

More complex is the question of injurious conditions of employment. We have not in the following sketches of the dangers found in various callings dwelt at length

on the influence of various environments or activities either upon self-control, the moral nature, or the physical system. Certain kinds of work are said to intensify the physical impulses of sex, but it is possible that this does not affect different individuals in the same way, and there are few influences which may not be in certain circumstances a temptation to indulgence, and in others a protection from it. Most callings have their dangers, which are often not those that appear on the surface, and their compensations. We find that the solitude of the general servant's life, although it protects her from bad companionship and solicitation, is yet more dangerous to her than rough company, bad language, temptation to drink, over-fatigue and uncertainty of income are to the factory girl. For the latter has full opportunities for letting off the wild spirits of youth : although on the Saturday night orgy she and her friends may appear to be behaving " like wild animals " they are purified by the outburst. The machinist may suffer a fatigue which lessens her self-control, and at the same time stimulates her physically to seek excitement and relaxation in sexual indulgence ; but she usually escapes the wearing influence of constant solicitation to which a barmaid or shopgirl may be exposed in strong and weak moments alike. But life is made up of risks, and perhaps none is greater than the risk of too carefully seeking to avoid all. So it would certainly seem in the cases of the strictly supervised girls who break away from repression into excess.

We must point out that the dangers of certain employments which involve publicity of association with men are almost coincident with their attraction to certain types of girls, and on the whole to fine, healthy, full-blooded, high-spirited types. But it must not be imagined that because these dangers exist we have any

reason to believe that any large proportion of girls fall upon evil times in following their bent, or that the risks of opposing their choice of a career would necessarily be less than that of allowing them to face the world as they choose. Domestic service, from which an overwhelmingly large proportion of prostitutes are drawn, is precisely that occupation which above all other is taken up by young girls *faute de mieux*.

We will now consider in the light of this enquiry how far these factors are present in some of the chief occupations of women.

### DOMESTIC SERVICE

The indisputable fact that domestic servants provide the majority of prostitutes is often brought forward as a proof that women take to the streets from love of the life, for domestic servants are not under the pressure of either low wages or unemployment. Such at least is the popular supposition. In reality it is possible that the girl who goes into service on leaving school, with shabby clothes and no domestic skill, may never do better than daily work at 3s. 6d. a week with food and an occasional gift of cast-off clothes, or a place as general servant in a house of nine rooms with a family of ten for £12 a year. And as for unemployment, it must be remembered that, though the cook and housemaid are almost certain to find situations at any time, the supply of nursemaids usually exceeds the demand for them. Still, it is true that domestic service is one of the least overcrowded occupations and offers the prospect of good wages to a competent woman.

That so many women turn away from this desirable calling to go on the streets is due to two things: the kind of woman who becomes a servant, and the conditions of domestic service.

In some cases domestic service is taken up by prostitutes for the opportunities it affords of meeting possible clients : such certainly take positions as chamber-maids in hotels and large boarding-houses. The respectable young girl who enters such service—particularly in certain hotels—is likely to be exposed to much that will at least shock her, though the prospect of making a good income from tips may make these situations attractive to many self-respecting young women who feel confident that they can take care of themselves. And in a far greater number of cases domestic service is taken up by those who need no occupational influence to drive them on the streets. The general servant is in effect an unskilled labourer. There is no practical test of efficiency which a general servant must pass or demonstrate her unfitness ; so it can be entered casually. And very often, particularly if the mistress helps with the more important work, the duties can be performed without drawing heavily upon the intelligence. In fact, it is the very occupation which appeals to the physically healthy but slightly feeble-minded girl. And this, as we have seen in the chapter on the Feeble-minded, is the type that turns most readily to prostitution. An examination of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded, where case after case of congenitally deficient girls is described as domestic servant, will show how largely the question of the occupational tendency towards prostitution of domestic service is complicated by the factor of mental deficiency. And obviously the situation which admits and often suits the girl who would be dazed or useless in the factory or shop, is equally attractive to the girl who is excluded from them for other reasons than mental deficiency ; who is too lazy to learn a trade process and too undisciplined to submit to

the routine of organised work, who has been driven out of other occupations owing to bad character or inefficiency, who has drifted down in the world and has no trade to her hand. In all these cases domestic service must be reckoned less as a factor in the making of a prostitute than as a stage through which the prostitute passes.

But it seems unquestionable that the conditions of domestic service are often such as would influence the normal girl to take up an immoral life. It has been said that this is specially so in the case of those who work during the day and go home for the night, and a certain Bishop spoke for a large section of Church Workers when he issued an appeal to mistresses urging them to make their servants live in and not to allow them many nights out. This remedy is not attractive to the modern mind, since there is no reason why this benevolent despotism should stop at the prevention of one vice among one class, and why it should not next attempt to stop drunkenness by making (let us say) builders keep their bricklayers in compounds. Also our cases do not show such a preponderance of daily workers as would suggest any special liability of this class. Of 47 such girls who became prostitutes nineteen came from bad homes, and of these six were feeble-minded and two were under sixteen: twelve came from good homes, but of these nine were feeble-minded and two were under sixteen; and of the thirteen whose home conditions were not described six were feeble-minded and three were under sixteen. Of only two could it be definitely asserted that when over the age of consent, with the advantages of a good upbringing, they became prostitutes. It is also obvious that the daily servant often comes from a class which is specially liable to temptation. The household that is so small that it



cannot spare a bedroom for the servant often gets the daughter of a poor home whose youth, rough clothes, and lack of domestic training prevent her from getting a better place ; and she has from her childhood been exposed to the immoral influences which spring from bad housing conditions. Here again where prostitution does occur it cannot be ascribed to any occupational influence.

But the conditions of domestic service appear to act very powerfully on the servant who lives in. To begin with, in almost every class of situation the servant may be exposed to the advances of the master or the sons of the house or the male guests. It is true, as Mr. Havelock Ellis points out, that the servant is often the initiator of the young lad in sex and is the seducer rather than the seduced ; but nevertheless a very large proportion of the servants who become prostitutes ascribe their downfall to their employers. A very intelligent girl tells us that after ten years' experience ranging from a situation as general servant at £18 a year to parlourmaid in a West End square she is not " surprised at that sort of thing in any house." She does not think that she has been exceptionally unlucky in the way of masters, for when she is helping guests to put on their overcoats after a dinner party they often make offensive remarks to her, so she supposes they behave in the same way in their own homes. She is in touch with a large number of other servants and says that in the main their experience agrees with hers. Probably there is confirmation of this opinion in the fact that among the cases sent us there is a larger number of mothers of illegitimate children who have been housemaids than those who have been cooks and kitchenmaids added together, and nearly all are reticent concerning the paternity of their children, even to those who seek to

help them ; for housemaids are brought more into contact with their employers than are either cooks or kitchenmaids. We are told that there are middle-class circles where the sons of the house freely treat the domestic servants in this way. And in the small household there are obvious dangers of contiguity, particularly where, as in districts of East London, the servant has to sleep in a kitchen through which the men of the house must pass when they come in late. It might seem that the girl was free to resist her employer, as she need not fear any long period of unemployment should she leave her situation, but it must be remembered that resistance might mean discharge with a bad character. And the fact that he is the man in authority is not the only influence at work : her own psychological condition is almost as important. She spends her life obeying. In yielding to her master she follows the habit of compliance with the wishes of the employing classes by which she lives. That this is an important factor is shown by the number of girls of institutional upbringing who have not been encouraged to develop initiative or any other virtue except obedience who are seduced in this way.

The psychological liability of the servant to prostitution has been very completely described by Frau Lily Braun in the following passage : " It is . . . worthy of note that by the conditions of their lives, servants more than any other class resemble prostitutes. Like prostitutes, they are a class of women apart ; they are not entitled to the consideration and the little courtesies usually paid to other women ; in some countries they are even registered, like prostitutes ; it is scarcely surprising that when they suffer from so many of the disadvantages of the prostitute, they should sometimes desire to possess some of her advantages also."

Seduction by employers does not seem to play a great part in very large houses or clubs, but its place is taken by bad companionship. Much evidence has come to us in the course of this enquiry that the mistress or master of a large house seldom knows much about the moral tone of their own servants' hall, and that it is indeed hardly possible for them to do so. A great deal depends upon the upper servants, who have had longer than most of their subordinates to suffer the demoralisation which surroundings of luxury are apt to breed in those who have little to do or interest them beyond the duty of ministering to their "social superiors." Men servants especially are likely to deteriorate morally, for they are debarred by unwritten rules of caste from the hard manual labour which keeps the housemaid or kitchenmaid "fit," and are as free to follow the vices of the employing class as they are cut off from its wider activities. This condition of things is aggravated by the dislike of some employers for married servants. As a result of this unhealthy sexual atmosphere much misconduct takes place. Among our cases half the kitchenmaids who become unmarried mothers name fellow-servants as the fathers of their children. The same state of affairs arises among club servants, who are not only in contact with luxury but are often in perpetual nervous excitement owing to the conditions of their work. In one club men and women worked together for ten hours a day in a kitchen so hot that they can wear only the scantiest clothing: here there is not unnaturally constant trouble with the kitchenmaids. In another club where there were forty-five women employed and a larger number of men, there were fifteen cases of illegitimate children in two years, and the moral tone was raised only by the completest separation of the sexes, who now do not even meet for meals. "Neither men nor

women had any time for recreation, so their only pleasure was in each others' sex," was the explanation given by a man who had worked there. So we see that no leisure is as dangerous as too much.

The general servant is in as much danger because she has no fellow-servants as the kitchenmaid is because she has. She is perhaps the most isolated figure in modern civilisation: the country girl who comes to service in a small household in a strange town has as narrow a social emotional circle as a lighthouse-keeper. Should she have no friends in the district her loneliness may lead her to make friends of whose character she knows nothing, and who may lead her into bad ways. Even if she has friends, the monotony of her life in the kitchen may drive her to spend her night in dangerous recreation at a dancing-hall or public-house. Even if she has no taste for these amusements she may yet fall in with bad company; for domestic servants are sometimes met with late at night, pacing the streets till the home-coming of the employer. A lady who lives in an outlying part of London and has her house closed every night at ten o'clock tells us that one night when her maid came to lock up she asked her if a friend might stop on in the kitchen. It appeared that this girl was a servant and was locked out until the return of her master and mistress at midnight: till then she had nowhere to go.

It is even possible that the servant will deliberately take up prostitution because of its contrast with her companionless existence: we have several cases of girls who have taken to the streets because "they would have done anything for company." Her isolation intensifies her psychological inclination to submissiveness, as she has no fellow-servants with whom she can assert herself as an equal. This has a doubly strong

effect on girls of institutional upbringing, who have had few opportunities for the development of the social instinct or the emotional life. Of this we have a typical case in a girl who was described to us by a rescue worker as having "fallen through her wicked animal passions"; she was brought up from infancy in a workhouse, was sent out as a general servant when she was sixteen, and was seduced three months after. The number of such cases suggests that a radical reorganisation of the housework of small homes, such as the establishment of co-operative kitchens and hostels for daily servants, would have had its effect on the problem of prostitution.

Bad conditions such as overwork, poor food, and unhealthy sleeping accommodation, are the rule in no class of situation, yet occur to some extent in every class. Even in a house where many servants are kept a girl may be obliged to blacklead sixteen grates in an hour and a half, and the servants' bedrooms in some of the older West End houses are airless and uncomfortable. The general servant may, particularly if she be young and untrained, have to eat the coarsest food, sleep in a damp basement, and work from fifteen to eighteen hours a day. It is not difficult to understand that the life of the streets will seem very attractive to the drudge of the low-class boarding-house, whose hands are red with dish-washing when they are not smutty with blacking, and whose body aches with running up and down four or five flights of stairs. And these hardships are not confined to poor households: they are also to be found in the most luxurious clubs and hotels. We have evidence as to five clubs where girls work seventy hours a week in kitchens where the temperature varies from 90 to 115 degrees. In one of these the heat saps the health of the strongest girls in about eighteen months. In many instances the food is bad and scanty and the



sanitary arrangements indecent ; and the case of the hotel where four maids slept in beds so close together that they had to climb in over the ends in a cellar ventilated by a small skylight opening by a dustbin, is not isolated. These situations are an example of the truth that high wages are not a conclusive proof of the desirability of an occupation, for a kitchenmaid in a club or hotel can make from £18 to £50 a year.

Consideration of these points may make it plain that a domestic servant who goes on the streets does not necessarily do so out of deliberate viciousness and "love of the life."

#### SHOP ASSISTANTS.

In almost every class of business the shop assistant is exposed to the advances of the man in authority, because it is the trade custom to give most of the important positions to men and to keep women in the position of subordinates. An example of the way this enforced valuelessness of women works out occurred in a large drapery store. A shop girl complained to her employer that one of the buyers was persecuting her with his attentions. The employer replied : " He is much more valuable to us than you are, and if you can't stand any more you had better go." It is not surprising that in this store the moral tone is particularly low and that many of the assistants are more or less habitual prostitutes. We have still cruder examples of similar misuses of power.

F. V. was a girl who served as manageress in a provincial penny bazaar. An inspector whose business it was to go round to six or seven branches made overtures to her several times, and always unavailingly. Then her father died and left her mother and younger brothers and sisters dependent on her earnings. She made an

application for promotion. Whether she should get it rested in the hands of this inspector. He heard of the stress she was in and he put it to her that if she would give herself to him she should have the promotion. She refused, and so did not get the desired situation. It may be hoped that this abuse will cease as the value of women's work is more generally recognised and women are permitted to attain positions of authority; for then it may be that even the least scrupulous employer will respect a female subordinate as a potential asset of the firm.

As regards enforced bad companionship we deal with an occupation which offers such an enormous variety of conditions that generalisations are impossible. But the evidence all tends to show that "living in" creates an unhealthy atmosphere. Apart from the mass of literature on the subject we have in the course of this enquiry collected a considerable amount of testimony respecting the moral conditions of various shops. It does not consist of indiscriminate grumbling: those who work under pleasant conditions seem eager to give honour where honour is due, and we have, for instance, several warm acknowledgments of the fair treatment to be found in a certain Regent Street shop. But testimony from a great number of independent sources convinces us that although there are honourable exceptions in many establishments, both the food and the sleeping accommodation are inadequate, while the weekly wage which is paid in addition is wholly insufficient to provide for a girl's clothes, holidays or recreations, much less for any supplementary nourishment. How far the employers directly suggest immorality to their employees as a means for adding to their income we do not know. But in any case, even where the employers are silent on the subject of prostitution, and declare

that they expect their assistants to be respectable, the moral atmosphere created by the monotonous and uncomfortable life makes the temptation to go out and make some money on the streets very strong. Stimulated to a state of nervous excitement by the stale air and their fatiguing duties they naturally seek for some relaxation, and it is not surprising that the thoughts of a large number of men and women penned together in a state of compulsory celibacy should turn to sex. This produces an atmosphere of sexual excitement which, if it does not lead at once to prostitution, may lead to laxity ; and this, if it is discovered, may mean dismissal and a disinclination to seek legitimate employment. However, our figures would not lead us to believe that shop-girls leave their employment and become regular prostitutes, but rather that many establishments are subsidised by the prostitution of their staff. The profound immorality of the employers' part in this is seen by the fact that in many cases it is not the shop with the large turnover and high price list that gives its girls treatment which permits them to remain respectable, but the less prosperous business which sells cheaper goods.

But even if a shop-girl does not live in she is exposed to certain risks. Just as the girl who lives in is liable to temptation when she is locked out on Sundays, so the girl who lives out may be annoyed by evilly-disposed persons if her hour of leaving employment is known, particularly if this hour be late at night. For example, a working woman complains that a young woman friend of hers who is employed at a small shop which closes at 11 p.m., " cannot get along without being followed, chiefly by elderly men."

There is also a certain psychological danger in much of the work that is performed by shop assistants. As

we saw in Chapter III., one of the strongest influences that attract a girl to prostitution is the love of dress. If this is a strong attraction to the working-class girl it is immeasurably intensified when she is employed in a fashionable shop or dressmaking establishment and handles beautiful things all day. Not only does she acquire a highly cultivated sense of beauty and fitness in dress, but she is perpetually in contact with customers who possess all that she desires. A dressmaker sums up this danger in the following answer to a question as to what led girls in her occupation astray : " To be quite honest about it, I think they take their cue from the upper ten. They hear the conversation of ladies who come to be fitted, and they begin by having flowers and sweets sent them, thinking it smart. Then there is the love of dress, and the work girls don't get any credit as the ladies do. There are," she adds, " numbers of girls who go out for relaxation and pick up a man whom nobody knows—he may be a married man, or a murderer, for anything they can tell. They may land on their feet, but it is only a matter of chance."

No generalisation can be made as to how far the shop attracts girls who in themselves would be likely to become prostitutes. We have already stated that some women who are already prostitutes take positions in shops for the purposes of their profession. As regards the others we are told by a prominent member of the Shop Assistants' Union that there is no other occupation where women from so many different stations in life work side by side. The professional man's orphan with a good but commercially useless education may work beside the labourer's daughter. But it is true that shop life often attracts the frivolous kind of girl who wants to get away from home, for the shop provides a home with pocket-money and no responsibilities. Another

authority tells us that "shop girls are farmers' daughters and country girls who can't bear their country life": girls who want to have a good time and will not submit to supervision. But this can be true only of a very small proportion. We have every reason to believe that shop assistants are as self-respecting and responsible as any other body of women wage-earners.

### FACTORY WORKERS

The advances of the man in authority seem to be a common annoyance of the factory worker. We are told by a social worker that in "many factories in a certain Lancashire district there is scarcely a girl who can say she has not been annoyed in this way by foreman or manager." The son of an employer in the Potteries tells us that it is very common there for men of his class to have relations with the work-girls, and he gives an instance of a young man, also the son of an employer, who had five children by different mill girls within the space of a few months. And for a wider testimony we may quote from "Women's Work and Wages" (Cadbury and Matheson): "During the course of this enquiry some hundreds of girls have been questioned, on applying for fresh work, as to their reason for desiring a change. As one would expect, either short work or low wages caused many to make an effort to 'better themselves,' but there remained a considerable number who had no such complaint to make. With these, the reason for leaving was generally that someone in authority was 'forward' or 'spoke as they didn't ought.' This is only a hint as to how things stand, and how the girls feel on the subject. Where they must work or starve, and where work is distributed according to the will of the foreman, girls are appallingly helpless if personal favouritism or feeling of any kind is allowed



to have influence in the 'shop.' ” But it is a very hopeful sign that two or three years ago there took place a strike in a London factory which was the first organised stand made by the girls themselves against the abuse of their position by the men in authority.

We have in Chapter III. quoted many instances of factory workers, one as young as thirteen, who were misled by bad companions whom they met at work. From a passage in “ Women’s Work and Wages,” and also from the evidence of a Leicester boot factor we learn that there are other dangers of companionship besides association with prostitutes. Married women are apt to talk too freely before the young girls who work with them, and inspire them with a curiosity which they may seek to gratify by illicit intercourse.

The physical conditions of a factory girl’s life are so various that generalisation is impossible. We have already pointed out that as a class she enjoys the exceptional advantage of having complete liberty after hours to let off her animal spirits. But it is also true that the factory may inflict on her more indecent and insanitary conditions than any other occupation. For example, E. E., who was employed at — in a biscuit factory, was employed at the ovens in company with men in such great heat that she was obliged to throw off nearly all clothing. She worked ten hours a day at a weekly wage of 8s. 6d., and was often unemployed. It is believed that the conditions of her employment led to her first lapse at the age of eighteen. When she was nineteen she had “ sunk too low for factory work,” and became a prostitute. We have another almost similar case of a girl three years older. It is hard to believe that such conditions could be found in any other occupation.

## TYPISTS

As the typist may be a correspondence clerk with a knowledge of three languages and a complete commercial education, or a little girl fresh from an elementary school and not quite sound in her spelling, and as any man from a banker to a tipster may employ a typist, we are again precluded from generalisation. But since a typist's work makes it necessary that she should work long hours in company with men, it is not surprising that she occasionally comes to harm, although the results of the enquiry would not suggest that she often becomes a prostitute.

Many employers seem to have no scruple about making advances to their typists. A middle-aged and rather plain woman who has a typewriting office in a large provincial town tells us that it is surprising how often she "at her age" was annoyed by the manners of clients of good position "who ought to know better." "They do not mean any harm," she says, "but they take offence if I fail to respond to their vulgar little familiarities, and I know I have lost work in that way." Her experience was probably typical. It must be remembered that many men who behave properly to women whom they meet in their own social world have no hesitation in offering familiarities to the women whom they meet at work. And it is possible that their manners may be misinterpreted by more refined women who enter their service, and that thus there springs up an erroneous idea of male immorality. But we have evidence that occasionally this idea is not erroneous. For instance, we have evidence that in a certain office in the City the employer seduces every typist who enters his employment.

There are also cases where the employer is merely a procurer who finds an advertisement for typists and

secretaries a good way of getting in touch with a number of better-class young women ; and it is also a device of the man who wants a mistress. One typist, for example, applied for and accepted a post in an office at a good salary. There seemed very little for her to do, and her employer had nothing to do either : she was given some papers to tear up and that was all. Her employer would not let her go out to lunch, but had some brought to the office. It seemed strange, and her worst suspicions were confirmed when the man who worked the lift said to her, after a few days : " Are you going to stop ? They never do. He has had a lot of girls. The last one had a baby." Another typist answered an advertisement from a " philanthropist," and was promptly invited to dine with him, but refused. At this first interview the advertiser frankly told her that he wanted a mistress as his wife was in a lunatic asylum. He offered to make settlements, and pointed out, probably with reason, that if she had to earn her living, this was probably the best thing she could do for herself.

But these cases are obviously exceptional. Most employers are fair in this matter, and we have evidence that there are some who are so anxious to maintain the respectability of their offices that they engage girls of a higher social status than their male clerks, as they see the improbability of a " lady " permitting disrespect from men of less breeding than herself.

The majority of girls who go into the City go because it is the only way of making a living that is open to them. But there are girls who go into offices because " you have so much fun there, get taken to theatres, and generally have a good time." Sometimes this frivolity becomes something less innocent, and we are told that it is not uncommon for a typist to be her employer's " left-handed wife." She may even be something con-

siderably less dignified than this. We hear of one typist who is "kept" jointly by several young men who are employed in the same office. And there are undoubtedly offices where the moral tone is exceedingly low. A respectable girl, the daughter of an artisan, was trained as a typist and sent out to an office. At the end of a fortnight she was told that she was not suited to her post. She was much upset, and her father came in great distress to the woman who had trained her. This woman came to the conclusion that the other girls in the office were of fast behaviour, and that the employer preferred not to have a respectable typist. Since then the girl has done well in an Insurance Office, and her work is excellent. Such dangers obviously depend largely on the nature of the business, and a girl is not likely to be tempted in an office where there is a heavy routine and a properly organised staff.

#### ACTRESSES.

In the public mind the stage is very closely associated with prostitution. Probably this is partly accounted for by the number of women who are "actresses in a highly technical sense of that word," as Mr. Shaw has put it: prostitutes who declare themselves actresses to their clients that they may flatter themselves on having bought the company of someone better than a common prostitute, and who repeat the declaration before the magistrate to explain why they were out so late on the streets or at the restaurant. And partly it is accounted for by the past and present condition of the stage. Up till about fifty years ago actresses were treated as social outcasts, and many of them who had neither strong characters nor happy family lives took advantage of the low standard set them by Society. And even now there is perhaps a greater tendency to

the formation of irregular relationships among actors and actresses than in other occupations. This is in part due to the unbalancing effect of the stimulation and fatigue consequent on the continued practice of interpretative art, and partly to the difficulty of leading a normal family life when on tour. Although this state of affairs has nothing to do with prostitution it nevertheless gives a section of the public the erroneous impression that the stage holds all unchastity in honour.

Similar difficulties arise, as we have seen, in most other occupations, but various circumstances intensify this inconvenience to the actress. In many cases there is no particular reason why the man in authority should choose a girl except because she has aroused his sexual emotions. The actress required for the subordinate parts in a *revue* or pantomime may, unless she is specially engaged to sing or dance, be described as an unskilled labourer ; and it would be absurd to assert that any conspicuous talent is required for most of the smaller parts in the ordinary commercial drama. Nor indeed is it easy to discover talent in the hasty way of making engagements that is customary in the theatrical profession. It is not to be wondered at that a man who has to select one girl from a number of equally eligible girls should allow himself to be governed by the extraneous consideration of sexual gratification. And on the actress' side the keen competition for work in this overcrowded profession makes her often feel that resistance is a rash surrender of an opportunity that may not be repeated. For even if she has a chance of getting work from other managers that too may be imperilled by resistance in the present case. An actress's failure or success depends very often not on the verdict of the public but on the gossip of a small circle of managers. Even when it is known that her disagreement with a



certain manager was wholly to her credit and quite unconnected with the dramatic art other managers may be shy of engaging her, in case they offend her influential enemy.

The dangers of bad companionship vary in different grades of the profession. In some quite famous theatres prostitutes and respectable actresses are employed indiscriminately to walk on and play the smaller parts, but off the stage they do not mix, and they dress in different rooms. This does not seem to be the case in musical comedies. We have one example of a feeble-minded girl of good family who became a chorus girl in various touring musical comedy companies and was influenced by several actresses who were also professional prostitutes to become a prostitute herself. And there is no doubt that in pantomimes the chorus girls who have been driven to prostitution during their period of unemployment corrupt their more innocent comrades.

Indeed the chorus girl does not lead a morally bracing life. Unless she is at one of the larger London theatres or on tour with one of the great musical comedy managers' companies she is liable to much unemployment and to disadvantageous conditions of employment when she gets it.

It is only natural that these conditions, coupled with uncertainty of income and the excitement incident to the stage, sometimes produce a state of moral squalor of which the following is a typical example.

O. G., a Manchester girl, was badly brought up ; her mother had died when she was eighteen months old and her father was a drunkard. However, she was sent to a good school and trained for the stage. At fifteen she joined a travelling music-hall company. At sixteen and a half a young married man offered her £5 a week if she would become his mistress, and gave her a

flat. She had a child by him and for a year after that he continued to keep her. When she was nineteen and a half the allowance was discontinued, and as a life of idleness had given her a distaste for work she became a prostitute.

It must be remembered that the girl who goes on the stage is usually possessed of vitality, good looks, and an adventurous spirit ; and these would render her liable to temptation in any calling. The question is further complicated by the vast number of prostitutes who either out of vanity or a desire to meet fresh clients take or buy positions on the stage.

Perhaps the most comprehensive statement of the present state of the stage was made by an actress whose own assumption of virtue rests on no more than the claim of exacting a certain decorum of approach from her lovers. She tells us that there is a good deal of love-making on the stage, but that lots of it is not sordid. Girls do not as a rule get engagements in the chorus till they are from twenty-one to twenty-four, and they know quite well what stage life is before they come. No one need be a prostitute because she is an actress. Promotion does not necessarily depend on favour, though she herself has received conditional offers of good engagements. Talent usually gets to the top. She admits that the actress is liable to be forced into prostitution through unemployment. The numbers who find temporary work in pantomime are so much greater than those for whom there is any regular employment. The actress is generally good-looking and attractive, or she wouldn't be one, and she is always prominently before the public. So that where she might be pursued by one or two men if she was a dressmaker or typist, she will be pursued by six. But pursuit is not capture and this may well be a case where there is safety in numbers for the girl of character and self-respect.



## AFTERWORD

*"No one can have observed the first rising flood of the passions in youth, the difficulty of regulating them, and the effects on the whole mind and nature which follow from them, the stimulus which the mere imagination gives to them, without feeling that there is something unsatisfactory in our manner of treating them. That the most important influence on human life should be wholly left to chance or shrouded in mystery, and instead of being disciplined or understood, should be required to conform only to an external standard of propriety—cannot be regarded by the philosopher as a safe or satisfactory condition of human things."*

*"Dialogues of Plato,"* translated by B. Jowett, Vol. III., p. 169. Introduction to Republic, Book X.

As stated in the Introduction, this enquiry has attempted no general review of the problem of prostitution but has been strictly limited to the motives which induce women to enter the trade. The fact that the investigators are women, has precluded an extension of the enquiry to the part played by the disorderly house with its financial supporters and managers, male and female, and to certain other factors of prostitution as an organised trade. Nor have the writers attempted to present the point of view of the *customer*. The man who buys has a case to state as well as the woman who sells, but it has proved impossible to include that side of the question here.

Nor have we been able to assess the enormous price that the nation as a whole pays for the presence of a prostitute class in its midst. The financial cost alone must run into millions, but cannot be even approxi-

mately calculated when the number of women concerned and the fees they receive are necessarily unknown. Further there must be included the cost of maintenance of thousands of women during frequent illness and premature decay, in rescue houses, workhouses, hospitals, asylums, and prisons. The diversion of thousands of women from productive labour to destructive idleness is an item of national waste which it has now become more imperative than ever to check.

But an even greater price is represented by the spread of venereal disease, not only among participants in the trade of prostitution, but to their innocent husbands, wives and children. The publication of the Report of the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease has placed the public in possession of the full facts, and there is no need to labour this point here. Already the public has awakened uneasily to some recognition of the fact that the life of the prostitute does affect other people besides herself, that she leaves insanity, blindness, deafness, sterility and innumerable physical evils in her trail, and that the foul stream falls on the just and unjust alike.

Equally widespread and deplorable is the moral damage caused by prostitution. The effect on the women is proverbial and is reflected in the phrases popularly used to describe her condition, but it is not so commonly recognised that her casual male associates may suffer profound moral and intellectual damage from contamination. Much that is puzzling and distressing in the relations of the sexes, both in family and public life, might be traced to the emotional havoc wrought in young men who have had their first and most vivid experience of sex in the sordid surroundings of commercial prostitution.

The cost being so incalculable and universally disastrous, it follows that for self-interested reasons alone



civilisation must endeavour to reduce prostitution to the lowest limits consistent with the personal liberty of responsible adults. It is commonly urged that the attempt is an impossible one as reformers are here up against "the fundamental facts of human nature" and the trade is as "old as humanity itself." It is well to remind this school of critics that prostitution is not synonymous with immorality and the problem is not that of securing perfect continence (outside marriage) in both sexes. On religious and ethical grounds some such ideal must form part of every campaign against prostitution, but the goals are not identical. Prostitution is promiscuity for gain, and while recognising to the full the force and power of the sex instincts on human conduct, it is yet possible to maintain that only in rare instances does natural instinct acting alone lead a woman to adopt a life of promiscuity. Still more rarely does it keep her in it if she is given a reasonable chance to earn a decent living in any other way. The net result of our enquiry is to confirm the experience of other writers, that prostitutes in the vast majority of cases come from regions where economic conditions cramp and deform human beings to such a degree that we can only guess what stature "nature" intended them to attain.

It has been admirably pointed out by Flexner in "Prostitution in Europe" that the causation of prostitution is infinitely complicated. "No one circumstance can be regarded alone as fatal, the complicated skein of influences and associations cannot be completely disentangled. The facts that have been adduced—broken homes, bad homes, exposure—do not then act directly as causes, in the sense that the girls involved take to prostitution 'as the sparks fly upward'." But certain facts which have emerged in the course of our

enquiry lend strong encouragement to the belief that many of the factors that go to the making of the prostitute (and probably of her customers also) are definitely remediable. At present we find a housing system which directly encourages the pollution of children in their own homes ; an educational system which denies the child instruction as to her own body or knowledge which would equip her for a struggle between her deepest instincts and the apparently arbitrary dictates of conventional morality. While still a child of fourteen she is caught up in the toils of an industrial system which condemns her to monotonous and exhausting work for ten to twelve hours a day, provides her with inadequately nourishing food, no time nor energy for intellectual development, and scanty opportunity for healthy amusement or outlet for animal spirits. All around her she sees a political, industrial, and to a certain extent, a social tradition of woman's subservience to man, which still further accentuates any natural tendency she may have to drift under temptation.

Civilisation can do better than this. Already it is beginning to do better, for every year finds a clearer public recognition of these social evils, and a public conscience increasingly sensitive to the resultant misery. It is in the belief that wider knowledge of the making of the prostitute can only inspire a greater hope in the possibilities of prevention, that this enquiry has been undertaken and published.

## APPENDICES

- I. ANALYSIS OF HOME CONDITIONS OF 356 PROSTITUTES.
- II. ALLEGED CAUSES WHY 669 WOMEN AND GIRLS BECAME PROSTITUTES.
- III. PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS OF 830 PROSTITUTES.
- IV. AGE OF FIRST LAPSE IN ABOVE 830 CASES.
- V. AGE WHEN THEY BECAME PROSTITUTES.

## APPENDIX I

### ANALYSIS OF HOME CONDITIONS OF 356 WOMEN WHO BECAME PROSTITUTES

	NORMAL.	M.D.	TOTAL
GOOD HOMES ... ..	57	31	88
INSTITUTIONAL UPBRINGING ...	22	12	34
BAD HOMES—			
Assault by father ... ..	6 ( <i>a</i> )	4 (1)	
" " other male relative' ...	3 ( <i>c</i> )	...	
Father sent her on the streets ...	3	3	
" " bad " ... ..	4 ( <i>b</i> )	8	
" committed murder and sui- cide ... ..	...	1	
Mother a prostitute or brothel- keeper ... ..	16 ( <i>a, c</i> )	4	
" cause or cognisant of girl's prostitution ... ..	5	3	
" " bad " ... ..	8	5	
Sister a prostitute ... ..	6 ( <i>b, d</i> )	3	
One or both parents drink ...	21 [+2]	21 [+4]	
Parents neglectful ... ..	3 ( <i>d</i> )	...	
" Bad home " ... ..	18	18 [+1]	
	— 89	— 70	159
LACK OF HOME—			
No effective guardians when under 16 ... ..	5	...	
No parents under 16 ... ..	...	10	
No home or parents when over 16 ...	24	9	
Turned out of home ... ..	2	3	
Afraid to go home ... ..	1	...	

*N.B.*—Overlapping cases are indicated by letters *a, b, etc.*, or by the sign [+2], indicating number omitted.

# APPENDIX I—*continued*

	NORMAL.	M.D.	TOTAL
<b>LACK OF HOME—<i>continued</i></b>			
Ran away from home because—			
parent drank ... ..	...	1	
of stepmother ... ..	4	...	
„ stepfather ... ..	1	...	
„ disagreement with mother ...	4	...	
„ „ „ father ... ..	1	...	
„ „ „ stepbrother ... ..	1	...	
„ quarrelling at home ... ..	1	...	
„ rigid discipline ... ..	1	...	
punished when out late ... ..	1	...	
of no definite cause ... ..	6	...	
	52	23	75
			356
Father only living when under 16 (including many already counted under Bad Homes) ... ..	13	7	20
Girl illegitimate (including 14 counted under Bad Homes) ... ..	16	10	26
Insanity in family (some counted under other headings) ... ..	6	7	13
Girl spoilt as a child ... ..	8	1	9
Parents very strict ... ..	6	1	7
Parents very poor ... ..	2	...	2



# APPENDIX II

ALLEGED CAUSES FOR BECOMING PROSTITUTES, 669 WOMEN

	Mentally Normal		Mentally Deficient:		TOTAL.	PER CENT.
	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.		
Vanity, love of pleasure, adventure	26	5.6	3	1.5	29	4.33
Bad companions	76	16.3	30	14.7	106	15.84
Wifful, unmanageable	7	1.5	2	1.	9	1.34
Misled by mother or sister after absence from home	1	.2	1	.5	2	.31
Bad upbringing	68	14.6	35	17.1	103	15.4
Bad school companions	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
Ignorance	3	.6	...	...	3	.44
Lack of home or care, including girls who ran away	26	5.6	21	10.3	47	7.
Out late, afraid to go home	2	.4	...	...	2	.31
Up from provinces, not knowing London	4	.9	2	1.	6	.89
Lived with man who forced her to go on streets or abetted her	10	2.1	1	.5	11	1.64
Husband sent her or acquiesced in her prostitution	11	2.3	...	...	11	1.64
Victim of exploitation	10	2.1	...	...	10	1.5
Non-resistant	...	...	11	5.4	11	1.64
Weak-minded	...	...	11	5.4	11	1.64
Sexual inclination	43	9.2	55	27.	98	14.65
Curiosity	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
Deficient will power	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
Wandering disposition	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
Drink	24	5.2	6	2.9	30	4.5
Left a widow, took to drink	6	1.3	1	.5	7	1.04
Emotional catastrophe, such as death of relative, or desertion	4	.9	2	1.	6	.89

# APPENDIX II—continued

	Mentally Normal:		Mentally Deficient:		TOTAL.	PER CENT.
	No.	Per cent.	No.	Per cent.		
Death of child ... ..	2	.4	4	2.	6	.89
Shock ... ..	...	...	1	.5	1	.15
Left widow and destitute ... ..	4	.9	...	...	4	.59
Deserted by husband ... ..	12	2.6	...	...	12	1.8
Left husband on account of his cruelty ... ..	3	.6	...	...	3	.44
Divorced ... ..	2	.4	...	...	2	.31
Lost character, home or employment, owing to relations with a man ... ..	40	8.6	7	3.4	47	7.02
Child to keep (unmarried) ... ..	14	3.	1	.5	15	2.24
Husband out of work ... ..	3	.6	1	.5	4	.59
Out of work ... ..	27	5.8	2	1.	29	4.33
Failure to get on in work in which placed ... ..	4	.9	...	...	4	.59
Deliberate for gain ... ..	8	1.7	...	...	8	1.2
To buy sweets ... ..	1	.2	1	.5	2	.31
To pay bridge debts ... ..	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
Laziness ... ..	9	1.9	3	1.5	12	1.8
Low wages in former employment ... ..	3	.6	...	...	3	.44
Destitute owing to fines (shop) ... ..	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
Bad situation ... ..	2	.4	...	...	2	.31
Seduction by employer ... ..	1	.2	3	1.5	4	.59
Demoralising work conditions ... ..	2	.4	...	...	2	.31
No place to go to on day out (domestic servant) ... ..	1	.2	...	...	1	.15
	465	99.4	204	100.2	669	

## APPENDIX III

### PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS OF 830 PROSTITUTES

	NORMAL.	M.D.	TOTAL
UNDER 16 (all occupations) at time of first lapse... ..	78	32	110
DOMESTIC SERVANTS—			
General Servants ... ..	65		
Probably General Servants ...	111		
Cooks ... ..	4		
Kitchenmaids ... ..	4		
Parlourmaids ... ..	4		
Housemaids ... ..	5		
Nursemaids ... ..	2		
Laundrymaid ... ..	1		
Between-girl... ..	1		
Unspecified service in larger houses	6		
Hotel chambermaids ... ..	4		
	— 207	86	293
Caretaker ... ..	1	...	1
Daily Domestic Workers ... ..	23	9	32
Laundry Workers ... ..	14	3	17
SHOP ASSISTANTS AND TRADERS—			
Shop Assistants ... ..	13		
Hairdresser ... ..	1		
Photographer's Assistant ...	1		
Barmaids ... ..	14		
Waitresses ... ..	4		
Commercial Traveller ... ..	1		
Street Traders ... ..	2		
	— 36	7	43

# APPENDIX III—continued

	NORMAL.	M.D.	TOTAL
<b>INDUSTRIAL WORKERS—</b>			
Dressmakers... ..	14		
Milliners ... ..	4		
Factory or Home Workers ...	45		
Bicycle Fitter ... ..	1		
Field Workers ... ..	2		
	— 66	23	89
<b>PROFESSIONS—</b>			
Teachers ... ..	3		
Companion ... ..	1		
Typists ... ..	3		
The Stage, etc. ... ..	8		
Artists' Models ... ..	2		
Hospital Nurses ... ..	3		
	— 20	2	22
<b>MARRIED AND WIDOWED—</b>			
Married women living with hus-			
bands ... ..	21		
Married women living apart ...	23		
Widows ... ..	13		
	— 57	6	63
<b>NO OCCUPATION</b> ... ..	71	89	160
	<u>573</u>	<u>257</u>	<u>830</u>





# APPENDIX IV

AGE OF FIRST LAPSE. A.—MENTALLY NORMAL

	7	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	34	37	Un-known	Totals.
Domestic Servants ...	...	...	...	...	...	4	11	34	24	36	13	14	6	4	2	2	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	72	225
Daily Workers ...	...	...	...	...	...	3	4	8	4	1	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	31
Laundry Workers ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5	3	1	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	20
Shop Assistants ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	18
Commercial Traveller ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Street Traders ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
Barmaids ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	15
Waitresses ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	4
Dressmakers and Milliners ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	4	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11	19
Industrial Workers and Bicycle Fitter... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	4	8	3	6	1	6	2	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	18	51
Field Workers ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Teacher and Companion ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	6
Typists ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
The Stage, etc. ...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	10
Artists' Models ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Hospital Nurses ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
Married Women living with husbands ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	21
Married Women apart from husbands ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	1	15	23
Widows ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	9	13
No Occupation ...	1	1	1	2	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	68	105
	1	1	1	2	6	14	34	64	47	48	24	28	12	8	4	5	3	1	1	2	2	...	1	1	1	1	263	575

## B.—MENTALLY DEFICIENT

	7	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	34	Un- known	Totals.	
Domestic Servants ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	11	4	5	4	4	3	...	3	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	51	90	
Daily Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	3	11	
Laundry Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	
Shop Assistants ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	
Street Traders ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Barmaids ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Waitresses ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Milliners ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Industrial Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	3	1	4	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	6	18	
Field Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	5	
The Stage, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Married Women living with husbands ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Married Women living apart from hus- bands ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Widows ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	2	
No Occupation ... ..	1	1	...	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	...	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	91	112	
	1	1	...	2	4	4	5	20	8	13	7	6	4	1	3	2	2	2	1	...	2	...	1	166	255	



# APPENDIX V

AGE WHEN THEY BECAME PROSTITUTES A.—MENTALLY NORMAL.

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	36	37	40	Un- known	Totals.	
Domestic Servants ... ..	...	2	2	20	18	22	19	13	10	6	1	2	2	2	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	101	225	
Daily " ... ..	...	1	1	4	4	5	3	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11	31	
Laundry " ... ..	...	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	20	
Shop Assistants ... ..	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	2	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	18	
Commercial Traveller ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Street Trader ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3	
Barmaids ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	15	
Waitresses ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	4	
Dressmakers and Milliners ... ..	...	...	...	1	3	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	19	
Industrial Workers and Bicycle Fitters ... ..	2	...	3	3	7	1	3	2	4	2	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21	52	
Field Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	2	
Teacher and Companions ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	6	
Typists ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	3	
The Stage, etc. ... ..	...	...	...	1	1	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	10	
Artists' Models ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Hospital Nurses ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3	
Married Women living with husbands ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17	21	
Married Women living apart from husbands ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	14	23	
Widows ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...	9	13	
No Occupation ... ..	1	4	3	4	10	4	4	2	1	1	...	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	67	104	
	3	8	10	36	47	39	34	21	21	14	2	4	8	6	1	8	...	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	300	575	

B.—MENTALLY DEFICIENT.

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	37	47	Un- known	Totals.	
Domestic Servants ... ..	...	...	...	3	7	5	6	6	6	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	55	90	
Daily Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	2	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	11	
Laundry Workers ... ..	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	
Shop Assistants ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	
Street Traders ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Barmaids ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Waitresses ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Milliners ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Industrial Workers ... ..	...	...	...	2	2	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	18	
Field Workers ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	5	
The Stage, etc. ... ..	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	
Married Women living with hus- bands ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	2	
Married Women apart from hus- bands ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2	
Widows ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	2	
No Occupation ... ..	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	106	112	
	2	...	1	6	14	10	8	6	7	2	1	1	...	1	...	2	1	2	...	1	...	...	1	1	189	255	



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